JEFFREY SACHS: CLINTON'S RUSSIAN FAILURE

JANUARY 31, 1994 · $2.95

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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JANUARY 31, 1994

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CORRESPONDENCE

Opening doors

To the editors:

Your issue "The Immigrants" (December 27, 1993) did not adequately explore one major reason immigration has become such an issue to the American public: jobs.

The U.S. Labor Department estimates that we will create 18 million new jobs in the 1990s. We already have 8.5 million unemployed (with tens of millions more outside the labor market) and 3.5 million Americans turn 18 every year, approximately 35 million in the decade of the 1990s. About 80 percent of adults in the United States enter the labor force. Now with 28 million young people looking for jobs (80 percent of 35 million) and at least 8.5 million already unemployed—does it make sense to bring in 10 million additional legal immigrants—to a country that anticipates creating only 18 million new jobs?

The biggest challenge of public policy is to know when and how the world has changed. We are no longer an empty continent with endless absorptive capacity. We have a cash-wage economy that is having terrible problems finding jobs for its own people. The concern about immigration is not nativism but common sense.

RICHARD D. LAMM
Former Governor of Colorado
Denver, Colorado

To the editors:

In his article "The Closing Door" (December 27, 1993), Nathan Glazer distinguishes between an immigration policy that recognizes "those who are in some sense one's own, with links to a people and a culture," and a policy based on "dislike, hostility and racial antagonism." He cites the Immigration Restriction or Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 as an example of the former: a pragmatic yet morally defensible approach to curtailing the flow of specifically targeted immigrant groups.

But Glazer too easily skates over the raw nativism that lay behind the Act's passage. Since the mid-1890s, Italians, Poles, Jews, Hungarians and other immigrants from southern and eastern Europe had begun to alter dramatically the ethnic composition of the nation. The 1924 act was a deliberate attempt to reverse this trend. It mandated that each country's share in the total quota reflect that country's respective proportion of the existing "national origins" of the entire nation. Such a policy would overwhelmingly favor immigrants from northern and western Europe. (Restrictionists had feared that a competing plan, fixing immigration at 2 percent of the foreign-born population according to the 1890 census, seemed too blatantly discriminatory to pass). The act drew upon the crude racial assumptions that had been gaining ground in scientific and academic circles since the late nineteenth century.

In theory, of course, there is a distinction between an immigration policy based on the desire to preserve existing bonds of politico-cultural affinity and one motivated by racial hatred or antagonism. But to recognize a difference does not obscure an underlying similarity. Ostensibly rational and phlegmatic policy such as "national origins" can serve all too easily as a smokescreen for prejudice.

JONATHAN HAFETZ
Brooklyn, New York

To the editors:

Nathan Glazer is right to reject the "racism" label for Israel's Law of Return and Germany's similar law for "ethnic" Germans, but liberals—and neoconservatives—should still condemn such policies as inherently bigoted. Racism, after all, is not the only kind of bigotry; religious and ethnic bigotry come from the same circle. It is well and good for the United States or any other country to restrict immigration, but not on the basis of anyone's ancestry or religion. The last thing we need is a balkanized world with every nation striving for ethnic, religious or racial purity.

MARK KOERNER
Madison, Wisconsin

To the editors:

Peter D. Salins's suggestion in "Take A Ticket" (December 27, 1993) that we Americans should not "contest the volume of immigrants" because "the rate of immigration relative to the nation's base population is far below historic levels," is disturbingly sophistic. Although his statement regarding the proportion of immigrants is accurate, he neglects to tell his readers that the absolute number of immigrants accepted annually into the United States is higher than ever before.

The fact is that the U.S. population has doubled in size within approximately the last fifty-five years and is projected at current growth rates to double again within the next fifty. Immigration accounts for nearly 50 percent of current population growth rates in this country. Every American should be concerned about the negative impacts of continued rapid U.S. population growth on our environment and quality of life.

MONIQUE A. MILLER
Executive Director, Carrying Capacity Network
Washington, D.C.

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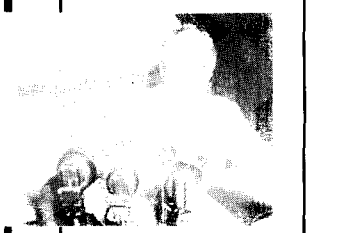

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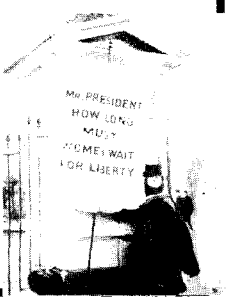

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To the editors:
Peter D. Salins ignores the practical benefits of family reunification preferences in immigration policy. Being a stranger in a strange land is hard enough without being cut off from one's family. Immigrants who arrive here often regard bringing over members of their families as part of their success in America. Familial relationships can greatly cushion the cultural shock of new immigrants. In addition, the support network of an extended family helps provide the groundwork of success for many immigrants, lessening the possibility that they will become a burden on the state. Although Salins's immigration policy would allow some exceptions for maintaining nuclear families, he would keep them as isolated islands. In the immigration debate the valuable support and foundations that familial relationships provide should not be ignored, even in view of "the fairest and most objective of procedures."

JAMES JUO
Arlington, Virginia

To the editors:
Contrary to Peter D. Salins's assertion that "Since 1980 New York is the only city east of the Mississippi to gain population," at least three cities that I am aware of have gained population during those years. Pursuant to the U.S. Department of Commerce 1990 Census of Population and Housing, from 1980 to 1990 Boston's population grew roughly 2 percent, Indianapolis's population grew 4.3 percent and the population of my own home of Columbus, Ohio, grew a staggering 12 percent from a population of 565,021 to 632,910. I am pleased to say that despite the recent flooding along the Mississippi, all three of these cities remain east of the river.

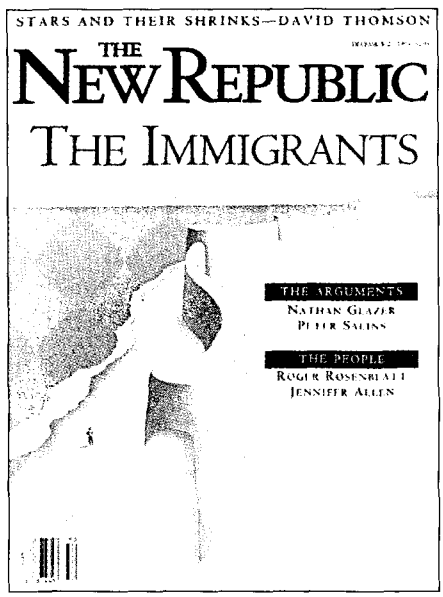
ROSS I. MOLHO
Columbus, Ohio

To the editors:
Roger Rosenblatt's article "Sunset, Sunrise" (December 27, 1993) brought back many memories of summers spent working for my father, delivering Coca-Cola in Sunset Park. Being a native Long Islander, it was an invaluable experience to be exposed to such a variety of cultures. It was in Sunset Park that I learned what it was to be the only person in the room who didn't understand the language. It was in Sunset Park that I learned that most of the people in the world didn't look or dress like me. And it was in Sunset Park that I learned to respect people for who they were. I also learned that despite differences in color and language and dress we shared some similarities. We all looked forward to a moment's rest in the shade with a cold drink and we all sweat as we worked under the scorching, unprejudiced Brooklyn sun.

DANIEL B. ROMANELLI
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Worst of both worlds

To the editors:
The praise that Clinton has "combined conservative hardheadedness with a liberal commitment to government activism" ("What Works," The Editors, January 3) sounded like a description of the English Poor Laws of 1815, which consigned the poor to workhouses. The reality is much worse: a combination of the worst aspects of old conservative politics (blaming the poor for not working)



and liberal politics (WPA jobs) with a new plank—requiring women to give their children over to state day care under the threat of revoking welfare benefits. Now, if the husband of a two-parent family were unemployed for years, would anyone propose taking his children away under threat of revoking public housing? Is being a poor single mother a crime?

Why not just offer the day care (preferably as phased-out vouchers) and see how many work their way out of poverty? This unprecedented policy would eliminate the concept of the culture of poverty without the state "breaking it."

JACOB KRAMER
New York, New York

Equal time

To the editors:
In the December 27, 1993, "Notebook," THE NEW REPUBLIC apparently agrees with the principle that in order to judge its fairness, Jonathan Pollard's sentences should be compared to other sentences. Why, however, does TNR compare his sentence to that of drug smugglers? Pollard's sentence should be compared to that of others who have spied for allies against the United States. For example, Abdel Helmy, an Egyptian-born American citizen, who illegally passed on ballistic missile technology to Egypt—which shared it with Iraq, enabling Iraq to use Scud missiles to kill American troops in the Gulf war—was sentenced to less than four years. Pollard has already served a longer sentence than anybody else who has spied against the United States for an ally. If equal justice is to be served, he must be freed.

AHARON FRIEDMAN
Brooklyn, New York

Evensong

To the editors:
To Mr. John Bush of Brooklyn, New York, whose plaint for "theological minimalism" (Correspondence, December 13, 1993) derives from his feelings about transcendence without any empirical proof of same, let me suggest to him the Episcopal Church, where no grating phrases are permitted and indeed the music is often quite nice.

DOUGLAS L. HENRY
Clarkesville, Georgia

Over Heard

To the editors:
Andrew Sullivan's Washington Diarist ("Voulez-Vous," December 6, 1993) undoubtedly spoke for many readers in summarizing the reaction to listening to Abba: "There are simply some products in the universe of truly awful pop culture that make you inexplicably happy."

However, Sullivan cannot take credit for this insight into the mysteries of human emotion. Longtime readers of TNR (not Andrew Sullivan?) will recognize this reaction as merely one instance of what Alex Heard, writing some years ago in TNR, termed "hathos": the fascinated, slightly guilty pleasure that is aroused by watching something, well, "truly awful." As I recall, Heard got his purest high from watching the Jerry Lewis muscular dystrophy telethon, and lamented when Tony Orlando took Lewis's place that, however awful, Orlando simply could not induce hathos as Lewis could. I personally favor late-night televangelists or Barney, but to each his own.

RUSSELL PITTMAN
Takoma Park, Maryland

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FROM WASHINGTON

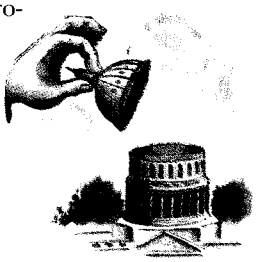
Oh, Karol

In the last year or so, we've all been uplifted by calls for greater attention to religion in our public life. There was Michael Lerner's (and Hillary Rodham Clinton's) "politics of meaning." There was Stephen Carter's lament of anti-religious prejudice in liberal culture, aggressively trumpeted by the president himself (whose own religiosity has become something of a political campaign). As an accompanying chorus there's been the usual communitarian/neoconservative braying about the need to reclothe the naked public square in a common spirituality. A month or so ago at the National Press Club, even Norman Lear, of all people, moved himself nearly to tears on the same subject. So why is it that a pivotal document on our shared moral values by the head of one of the world's largest religions has hardly been mentioned in this context at all?

Veritatis Splendor ("The Splendor of Truth"), John Paul II's most ambitious encyclical yet, managed about half a news cycle when it was issued last August. My attentiveness was no better than most journalists. The 40,000-word treatise sat on my desk for months in a helpfully annotated Catholic News Service leaflet before I found the gumption to plunge into it. The few articles I'd read about it didn't help. You could almost hear the crushed sighs as the religious reporters (on page A16) dutifully noted that this was not proof positive that the Holy Father had finally gone nuts and infallibly proclaimed masturbation a mortal sin. No, *V.S.* was a serious, complex work about the nature of moral theology. It begged closer study. It would provoke full and frank discussion in the church and beyond. "Only time will tell," a *Commonweal* writer wrote breathlessly last October, "if the theological worldview of this encyclical will stand the test of the future."

So it came as something of a surprise to find that *Veritatis Splendor* is a truly radical moral argument. If all those lamenting the lack of religion in our public life need a text from which to draw inspiration, this is it. As you read, it's hard not to feel the thrill of the subversive, the exhilaration that comes from reading an astringent attack on conventional wisdom from unapologetically religious assumptions. The text's assault on liberal notions of morality makes Catharine A. MacKinnon look nuanced; its assertion of transcultural sources of moral authority makes James Q. Wilson look tame.

What does it say? It asserts, in what amounts to a full-scale assault on much post-Vatican II theology (and current secular mores), that the morality of an act does not inhere in its context, or its circumstance, or its intention, or its consequence, or the process by which the individual conscience comes to its decision. Its morality lies simply in the act itself; and certain acts are just wrong, forbidden, anathema, *intrinsece malum* in the delightful Latin phrase, always and everywhere, by anyone and everyone, now and forever. And this assertion is not an assertion; it is *true*, an objective fact. Maybe you have to have taught freshman seminars in moral theory to get a real kick out of that zinger, but it got my Tridentine pulse racing.



Remember this? The origins of truth are to be found in revelation. Such truth is solely interpreted by the highest authorities in the Roman Catholic Church. It is an "objective norm." It cannot be questioned. Conscience is not wrestling with this revelation to decide what is good and what is evil. It is correctly applying it to every single act. Believing in this truth and applying it in one's life are inseparable activities. The exemplars of this notion of the moral life, moreover, are not cuddly, fallible icons, but something a little more demanding: "The church proposes the example of numerous saints who bore witness to and defended moral truth even to the point of enduring martyrdom or who preferred death to a single mortal sin." Martyrs as role models? And this to a culture whose idea of sacrifice is a tough abs workout at the gym.

I am obviously simplifying. There are small concessions to such concepts as prudential judgment, different levels of consent to sin and human frailty. The church, for example, "must always be careful not to break the bruised reed or to quench the dimly burning wick," the Holy Father writes, in a rare moment of eloquence. Elsewhere, however, the tone is unmistakable. You want religion? Here it is: a ringing call to submission of the will to a higher authority, absolutist, fundamentalist, at times insanely contemptuous of worldly pettiness and human need.

As a typically tortured Catholic, I have my problems with this argument, but I have no problems with its ambition or authority. Its Ratzingerian call for rapturous abandonment to God contains no help for those of us whose faith seems stuck in the mire of sacramentalized doubt; and its glib dismissal of the moral achievement of modern individualism seems, on the whole, a little obtuse. But the crystalline austerity of its spiritual vision has the authentic ring of faith to it, a quality that still resonates in this frustrating papacy.

As an equally tortured citizen, however, I have real problems with the document's scope. Any honest reader cannot but see in it a fantastic critique of the fundamentals of liberal society. Like most fundamentalist texts, it shudders at secular compromise. In a world in which salvation is man's supreme end, in which conscience is merely the imposition of objective truth upon the self, in which true dissent is anathema, there is, after all, a somewhat cramped space for the Bill of Rights. If this impulse were allowed to truly enter our political life, it would soon construct a carapace of moral correctness that would dwarf the puritanism that's now widespread on America's campuses. If brought into the civic sphere, it would lead to the ultimate politics of meaning, which is why, of course, in all the rhetoric about our spiritually empty culture, it's been ignored by the boomer pundits, desperate to fill their existential void.

Liberals—on right and left—should read and marvel at this document. It's a reminder that the religious urge is by no means dead—not even (heaven help us) in the organized churches. And although there are plenty of traditions with nothing like the asperity of Karol Wojtila's irenism, it's a warning of what the heady consequences of such an impulse can be for the maintenance of a liberal society. (If you doubt this, visit Poland.) The proper response of political liberals to such a text is therefore suspicion and hostility; the proper response of any serious human being is deep attraction. If you happen to be both, the result is a somewhat complicated life. But a more interesting project, surely, than clothing the naked public square.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

JANUARY 31, 1994

IF NOT BOSNIA, WHAT?

During a press conference on the first day of the Brussels summit, as President Clinton was rhapsodizing about how the new NATO would meet the challenges of the new Europe, a reporter with no evident sense of decorum brought up the subject of Bosnia. Clinton tried uneasily to get back to his script. The "Partnership for Peace," NATO's overture to the East, would have "greater significance, in my judgment, for the future of Europe than whatever is or is not done with the tragedy of Bosnia at this late date."

Bosnia, in truth, remains what it was widely considered to be before resurgent Russian nationalism pushed Western fears back into their cold war grooves: a paradigmatic threat to stability in Europe. Whether or not the allies finally muster air strikes against Serbian troops, Bosnia will continue to serve as a living, bleeding testament to NATO's flawed structure. And the flaws are almost as large after the Brussels meeting as before.

What if Yugoslavia had been a "partner for peace" before it decomposed? (Well, Serbian troops might be better trained and better armed.) What if Serbia and Macedonia were now "partners for peace"? (NATO could try to defuse tension between them—but only if both countries wanted tension defused, in which case any number of organizations could perform that service.) Or, looking further down the road: What if two nations, having graduated from peace partners to co-members of NATO, go to war?

NATO can't stabilize Europe by annexing instability. Its failure in Bosnia reflects not the alliance's size but its character. NATO's charter envisions only one purpose: mutual self-protection; an attack on one is an attack on all. What Europe needs now isn't a larger, less coherent league of self-defense (though a larger coherent one is fine, once democracy has deeper roots in the East); Europe needs a prudent, forceful regional policeman.

In 1992 NATO expanded its job description to include "out-of-area" operations. Hence the prospect of Bosnian air strikes. But such missions must be requested by either the CSCE (don't waste your time trying to recall that inert acronym) or the Security Council. At his press conference, Clinton noted that in Bosnia "NATO has done everything that the United Nations has asked it to do." Well, yes. NATO has enforced the embargo that deprives Bosnians of weapons and the no-fly zone that keeps Serbian aircraft at bay. That adds up to roughly zero progress. Alas, after the triumph of collective security in the Gulf war, zero progress seems again to have become the U.N.'s hallmark. Even when the Security Council does show resolve—and it *has* authorized air strikes—policy execution is left to Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who has never been confused with Rambo.

Actually, the gridlock is even worse than this. Once a mission is approved by all five Security Council members, it must be approved by all sixteen NATO members. Try to imagine a meaningful mission endorsed by the United States, France, Germany, Russia, China, Greece, Turkey, etc. Conceivably, the shelling of Sarajevo may yet provide the occasion for one, but that so vivid an evil has gone so long unaddressed speaks volumes about the absence of a real security structure in Europe.

The NATO summit yielded a ray of hope, though no one seems to have noticed. The allies endorsed Clinton's "combined joint task force" proposal. This partly dubious idea—it could turn into a fig leaf for American disengagement from Europe—also might evolve into the needed revamping of NATO's identity. Under the plan, some alliance members could use NATO assets in out-of-area missions, while less enthusiastic members would get to keep their troops at a safe distance. Thus a formal subset of NATO nations, such as the Western European Union, would approach NATO's governing body, the North Atlantic Council, and ask to intervene under NATO auspices in some European crisis.

What would happen next is unclear; the details will be worked out by a NATO advisory committee over the next five months. Here lies the golden opportunity. First, these out-of-area missions should require only the North Atlantic Council's approval, not the Security Council's or anyone else's. Second, this approval should be defined as something less than unanimity (to keep NATO from being hamstrung by veto) but not much less (to prevent rash, incendiary intervention). Say, thirteen of sixteen votes—or some subtler formula, weighting votes by each nation's might, or its shouldering of the NATO burden, or whatever. The main thing is that NATO be able to credibly threaten swift response in the event of transborder aggression or ethnic warfare. Even so, of course, moral lapses on the scale of Bosnia might occur. But at least American presidents (and here we think mainly of George Bush) would then have a harder time dodging the blame. •

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NOTEBOOK

NEWS FROM THE GUTTER: With its lurid radio spots on the Rush Limbaugh show, *The American Spectator* confirms that it is more interested in boosting circulation than it is in serious journalism. "In the January issue, on newsstands now," says a leering bass voice, "David Brock, author of *The Real Anita Hill*, uncovers a pattern of lies and lawbreaking ... including misuse of public funds and services for the facilitation of numerous extramarital affairs. Brock reveals that even after Bill and Hillary Clinton proclaimed on "60 Minutes" that their marital difficulties were over, the affairs, deceptions and abuse of the public trust and money continued—*right up to the inauguration.* This astonishing report, the result of months of investigation, exposes unlawful attempts by administration staffers and the president himself to suppress this story ... and sheds new, shocking light on the suicide of Vince Foster." In fact, Brock presents no evidence whatsoever that the affairs continued up to the inauguration or that the president broke the law. But the *Spectator*'s 1-800 circulation number is ringing off the hook.

NOT SO BIG TENT: Senator Bob Packwood's campaign to rehabilitate his image grows increasingly surreal. Touring a tent factory in Eugene, Oregon, on his first visit home since summer, he was hectored by demonstrators waving signs that read: "Pack it in, Packwood!" The flustered senator begged his hosts to "Show me a yurt, now!" and they complied, quickly hustling him under protective cover. A recent appearance on National Empowerment Television, the twenty-four-hour, right-wing television network, went more smoothly. Against a backdrop of flowered curtains and a vine-covered white picket fence, Packwood was grilled respectfully about his views on health care. "We know you have incredible work habits," purred Nancy Mitchell, co-host of the neocon morning chat show "Mitchells in the Morning." "We wanted to get your opinion as the consummate insider in Washington." Although the embattled senator paled at a query that began: "There's just one thing I can't resist asking you about!" he needn't have feared. The question turned out to be: "What's the timing [on health care reform]?"

CLINTON SUCK-UP WATCH: Ted Koppel.

FOR THE RECORD: The Palestinian News Agency quoted it, and so did the A.P. But we didn't see it in many newspapers, and we certainly didn't see it in either *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post.* Maybe their editors don't think it's significant when Yasir Arafat, in a broadcast to PLO militants in Gaza, proclaims that "the heroic intifada, which has entered its seventh year, is an extension of the twenty-nine-year-old Palestinian revolution, and will go on relentlessly.... It is continuing, continuing, continuing." This does not put him much at odds with other Palestinian extremists, who are supposed to be his enemies and, ergo, the enemies of peace itself. But it does put him at odds with the peace process he has committed to, and the credibility he has recently won.

THE DECLINE OF THE WASP:

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The roots of the Chiapas revolt.

ZAPPED

By Enrique Krauze

MEXICO CITY

"I want democracy, and an end to inequality. I seek a decent life—liberation—just as God says." The speaker is José Pérez Mendez, a 24-year-old peasant who belongs to the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, the mysterious and surprising group that took over three cities in Mexico's Chiapas state near Guatemala on January 1. Pérez Mendez was taken prisoner—not by the Mexican army, but by peasants like himself, inhabitants of the small village of Oxchuc. His simple words are a key to understanding the tragedy in Chiapas, which has already changed Mexico.

"Mexico is the land of inequality," wrote the German naturalist and humanist Alexander von Humboldt at the beginning of the nineteenth century. And so, in many places, it remains. The north of Mexico is an area of progressive, individualistic businessmen and farmers. The center, home of the Aztecs and the main stage of the Spanish Conquest, is stable, having passed successfully through a period of biological and cultural mixing—*mestizaje*. Both areas are now oriented toward the political and economic values of the West.

Chiapas, by contrast, is the Peru of Mexico, economically backward and ethnically divided. Together with its neighboring state of Yucatan, it covers almost the entire historical zone of the ancient Mayas. There was no *mestizaje* here. The Mayas and the Spanish erected walls of resentment against each other, which led to the two truly ethnic wars in Mexican history: the terrible "War of the Castes" in Yucatan between 1847 and 1850, and the uprising of the Tzeltal and Tzotzil Indians in Chiapas in 1712. In that conflict, a prophet calling himself Sebastian de la Gloria announced "the death of the king and of God," and the appearance of a Virgin in the jungle. He then led attacks on several towns, killing the entire white population and looting the plantations and sugar mills of the Dominican friars. Yet the indigenous people largely rejected de la Gloria's experiment; it ended not in the equality of the primitive Christians but in an ephemeral and grotesque pseudo-Christian tyranny.

To this day, a peculiar despotism of ethnic origin characterizes life in Chiapas. As late as the 1940s, many coffee plantations—coffee, severely depressed in price, is the state's main crop—followed practices of servitude worthy of the antebellum South. In almost every social and economic indicator, Chiapas is far below the national average. Of its 3.2 million people, 59 percent are peasants earning less than $300 per month; 40 percent of homes have running water; 33 percent lack electricity; barely half have plumbing.

Chiapas's poverty and bloodstained history are compounded by the political deformation of contemporary Mexican society. If Humboldt were traveling today, he probably would have written: "Mexico is the land of anti-democracy." Anti-democracy is not tyranny. We Mexicans enjoy freedom of movement, association, religion, thought and expression. No, anti-democracy is a system that perverts democracy through electoral fraud, corruption and patronage. In Mexico there is no republican, representative, democratic federal regime—as our constitution proclaims. Rather, we have a kind of six-year paternalistic monarchy dressed up as a republic. In this sense Pérez Mendez is an insurgent of uniquely Mexican stripe, a synthesis of Emiliano Zapata and Francisco I. Madero, those two caudillos of the Mexican revolution who sought to return to the people land usurped by the ruling classes and who advocated the installation of a fully democratic regime.

Thus Chiapas was the obvious place for modern Mexican revolutionaries to stake their claim. But for all the historical factors that help explain the revolt, its driving force is contemporary: ideology. This is not a peasant revolt like that of the libertarian Zapata—which was geographically limited and focused specifically on recovering communal lands from the large estates. Nor is it a spontaneous indigenous revolt like those of the colonial era. Mexico is witnessing today a typical Latin American guerrilla movement in which the Indians are the cannon fodder and their leaders, the *comandantes*, supply the quasi-religious ideology and the military strategy to achieve their objectives: separate Chiapas from Mexico, create a "liberated zone"—in short, a scenario of secession and civil war.

While Pérez Mendez is a figure from among the people, the *comandante* is an urban figure, probably a university graduate, who claims to represent the people. It's the same old story of the Central and South American guerrillas. The *comandantes* not only speak on behalf of the people, but also consider themselves, as it says in their manifesto, the "heirs of the true forgers of our national identity." Many are tied to the so-called "Ecclesiastical Base Communities," organizations of laypeople linked to the faction of the Catholic Church that chose "the preferential option for the poor." As part of a movement that swept Latin America in the '70s and '80s, these groups developed "cells of action" in Chiapas with a view toward insurrection. The ideology of these catechists is Liberation Theology and their barely disguised caudillo is Samuel Ruiz, who has been bishop of the state for thirty years. Some of the *comandantes* are surely veterans of Central America's guerrilla armies, which have vast leftover arsenals. To the obligatory question about the failure of real socialism, one *comandante* responded: "Our case will be different; here it will work."

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Pérez Mendez has suffered all forms of vexation in his life, but it's unlikely he partakes of the intellectual cult of violence the *comandantes* profess. It is not a cult of peasants but rather of university students, of the Dostoyevskian "possessed." For the peasants of Chiapas, misery, electoral fraud, unemployment and disease are terrible realities, even unbearable ones, but they are not death itself. The peasants want to preserve the last word about death. Perhaps because of that, the majority have repudiated, by fleeing and waving white flags, the violence of truth, the violence of death. In Ocosingo and Altamirano, the rebels were forced to retreat in the face of public hostility, just like de la Gloria's men in the eighteenth century. "When I saw those brothers," Pérez Mendez said, referring to the residents of Oxchuc, "I thought that they were comrades, but it turned out not to be so and about fifteen of them beat us with sticks."

The best-case scenario for Mexico in this election year is that the army will isolate the guerrillas, limiting their attacks to the region. The worst-case scenario is that there will be new outbreaks of guerrilla war in other traditionally violent areas of the south or the poor Indian highlands of Puebla state or Oaxaca state. The students in the cities would get impatient, organize their own "action cells" and commit terrorist acts. The most probable outcome lies between these two extremes. But in any case, we Mexicans must get used to living in a kind of tension to which we thought ourselves immune.

If there is a solution to the new unrest, it lies in convincing the citizenry that the upcoming elections—on August 14—will be clean and the triumph will go to whoever wins, whether it is the candidate of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), Luis Donaldo Colosio, or not. Perhaps the best formula would be to turn over responsibility for supervising the electoral process from the current government-dominated agency to a panel of prominent nonpartisan citizens. If election day arrives without that agreement and with the guerrillas still active or latent, the country could enter into a crisis of governability that would create a power vacuum the army might be tempted to fill.

The fanatical call of Mexico's *comandantes* will not move most Mexicans. Not even the Indians. President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's economic reforms have had positive consequences for the majority. The government launched a substantial program of support for the poorest Mexicans that, paradoxically, was just beginning to operate in Chiapas. If it wants to avert disaster, any future government will have to continue these policies. For these reasons, for Mexicans as well as Americans, the conflict in Chiapas does not vitiate the reasons for supporting the North American Free Trade Agreement: namely, that the pact would contribute to Mexico's modernization and, ultimately, its stability. Rather, the uprising only underscores the need for the progress that NAFTA will spur. In a way it is a miracle that Mexico had been spared the typical Central American guerrilla war up to now, and it is lucky that this guerrilla war arrived late, after the fall of socialism and at a time of peace in Central America. But still it must be fought decisively; there is no going back to the guerrilla romanticism of a generation ago.

ENRIQUE KRAUZE, co-editor of *Vuelta* magazine, is writing a book about power and religion in Mexico.

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

WATER TORTURE

By Fred Barnes

Paul Begala, the White House political adviser, says the flap over Bill and Hillary Rodham Clinton's involvement in the Whitewater real estate development is "a cultural thing." The Clintons, especially the First Lady, don't bend easily to the political culture of Washington. One of the rules of that culture, enforced since Watergate, is that you can't halt the scandal machine. When the press whips itself into a feeding frenzy and the political opposition joins the hunt, as it has in Whitewater, there's no stopping. The best strategy, even if you believe you're innocent and there's no compelling evidence of wrongdoing, is to disclose everything and summon a special prosecutor. "Only in Washington," huffs Begala. "We're just not used to that. We think like Americans."

So the Clintons resisted, and that might have worked if Whitewater was a contest between America and Washington. It's not. Whitewater merely pits the Clinton White House against the ways of Washington. Naturally, Washington is winning. The attempt by the Clintons to withhold Whitewater documents from Justice Department prosecutors crumbled in three days. On December 20 *The Washington Times* revealed Whitewater records had been removed from the desk of White House lawyer Vincent Foster hours after his suicide last July. On December 21 Hillary Rodham Clinton declared the papers would stay with the Clintons' personal lawyer, David Kendell. "We've done what we should have done and don't feel the need to do any more than we've done," she said. Two days later, the White House announced the documents would be turned over.

The strategy of resistance was pursued against the advice of aides such as counselor David Gergen, who concluded it was futile. Gergen often prevails in White House debates, but not when Rodham Clinton rejects

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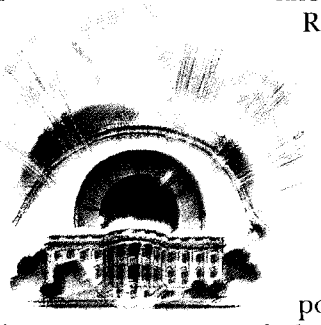
his advice, as she did on Whitewater. She is rarely challenged. As the Clinton health care bill was being crafted last year, the only official bold enough to raise doubts at Cabinet meetings about the plan was economic adviser Laura Tyson. Somehow Tyson survived. "People are terrified of [Rodham Clinton]," says a White House official. Only reluctantly did she agree to give up the Whitewater documents.

Hillary Rodham Clinton was the source of a problem for White House defenders on Whitewater. She knew more about the matter than anyone else. She not only invested in the development with her husband, she once sought power of attorney for the project and served as the lawyer for Madison Guaranty, the savings and loan owned by Jim McDougal, the Clintons' partner in Whitewater. Bill Clinton, governor of Arkansas for all but two of the thirteen years the Clintons held the Whitewater investment, was by all accounts far less active. Given this, it would make sense for Rodham Clinton to debrief the White House staff on Whitewater. But no one dared ask for such a session.



The result was painful to watch: those dispatched to defend the Clintons flew half-blind. Begala says he hasn't discussed Whitewater with the Clintons since the spring of 1992, when it was briefly an issue in the presidential campaign. Gergen, explaining on CNN on January 7 why the Clintons had lost $68,900 on Whitewater but hadn't shown a loss on their tax return, made this confession: "My understanding of this, I must tell you, is imperfect. I don't know all the facts because I'm not sure anybody knows all the facts in all of this.... I do not claim to be the final word on it." He's not, but Rodham Clinton may be.

She and the president were not available for T.V. interviews on Whitewater. (An exception occurred on Clinton's European trip when T.V. reporters added Whitewater questions to their interviews of the president.) Instead, while mounting an aggressive counterattack, the White House put forward spokesmen somewhat removed from the issue. Mack McLarty, the White House chief of staff, and Harold Ickes, who heads the Whitewater damage-control team, did not step forward publicly. George Stephanopoulos made a lone appearance on CNN's "Capital Gang" on January 8. The chief Clinton defender was Begala, a likable political consultant who is not on the White House payroll. Gergen, a Washington fixture who didn't work for Clinton in Arkansas or during the 1992 campaign, was hesitant about showing up on T.V., given his state of knowledge. He was contacted by a White House associate at 9 p.m. on January 6, as he ate dinner with staffers for *Newsweek* magazine, and was told he'd been slated to appear the next morning on NBC's "Today." He went.

Gergen, who worked for three Republican presidents, didn't relish the role. When he joined the White House staff last May, he said he would promote Clinton's policies but avoid partisan clashes with Republicans. He's talked about quitting the White House before the midterm election this fall. On "Today," however, he zinged "the opposition party" for "hammering away" at Clinton as the president was returning to Arkansas to bury his mother. Later that day on CNN, Gergen not only lamented his lack of knowledge of Whitewater, he tried to retreat. "I was not trying to single out Republicans on that point," he said. Really? What opposition party did he have in mind, then?

From the start, the Clintons and some of their aides misread the staying power of Whitewater. When the White House agreed to give the documents to Justice investigators, they assumed the flap would subside. When GOP Representative Jim Leach of Iowa emerged as Clinton's chief Whitewater critic, they figured he'd be easy to deal with. Before Begala debated Leach on T.V. on January 4, James Carville, his partner in a Democratic political consulting firm, urged him not to attack Leach personally. Carville said Leach was known as "a good guy." But when Leach said Republicans didn't create the Whitewater controversy ("After all, the Republicans didn't bring about a suicide of a top presidential adviser"), Begala exploded. "I got as angry as I've ever been," he said later. He told Leach that to cite Foster "to try to tar the president is beneath you and beneath your party."

The White House devised talking points for its defenders, but there were holes. For example, aides couldn't get their stories straight on why the Clintons hadn't claimed a tax loss on Whitewater. Begala said the reason was "the hassle factor," the certainty they'd be criticized. Besides, Begala added, there wasn't enough documentation "to satisfy the IRS." Other aides have explained the Clintons could only claim a loss against a capital gain. And their gain from selling their share of Whitewater, $1,000, was too small to make any deduction worthwhile. In truth, they were entitled to claim a loss of $3,000 against their ordinary income. Aides also argued there were no allegations the Clintons had done anything wrong. Actually, David Hale, a Little Rock judge now under indictment, accused Clinton of pressuring him in 1986 to arrange a Small Business Administration loan to aid McDougal's Madison Guaranty. And the Resolution Trust Corporation sent another Madison case to Justice for criminal investigation in 1992, mentioning the Clintons in the referral.

Clinton aides with Washington experience knew resistance was doomed once Democrats began endorsing an independent prosecutor. The first Democrat to say so was Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York on January 9. Stephanopoulos, who worked on Capitol Hill for most of the 1980s and early 1990s, happened to be invited to Moynihan's house for dinner the evening of the senator's defection. Stephanopoulos might have stayed away in protest. But he didn't. Three days later, Clinton said he wanted a special prosecutor, too. •

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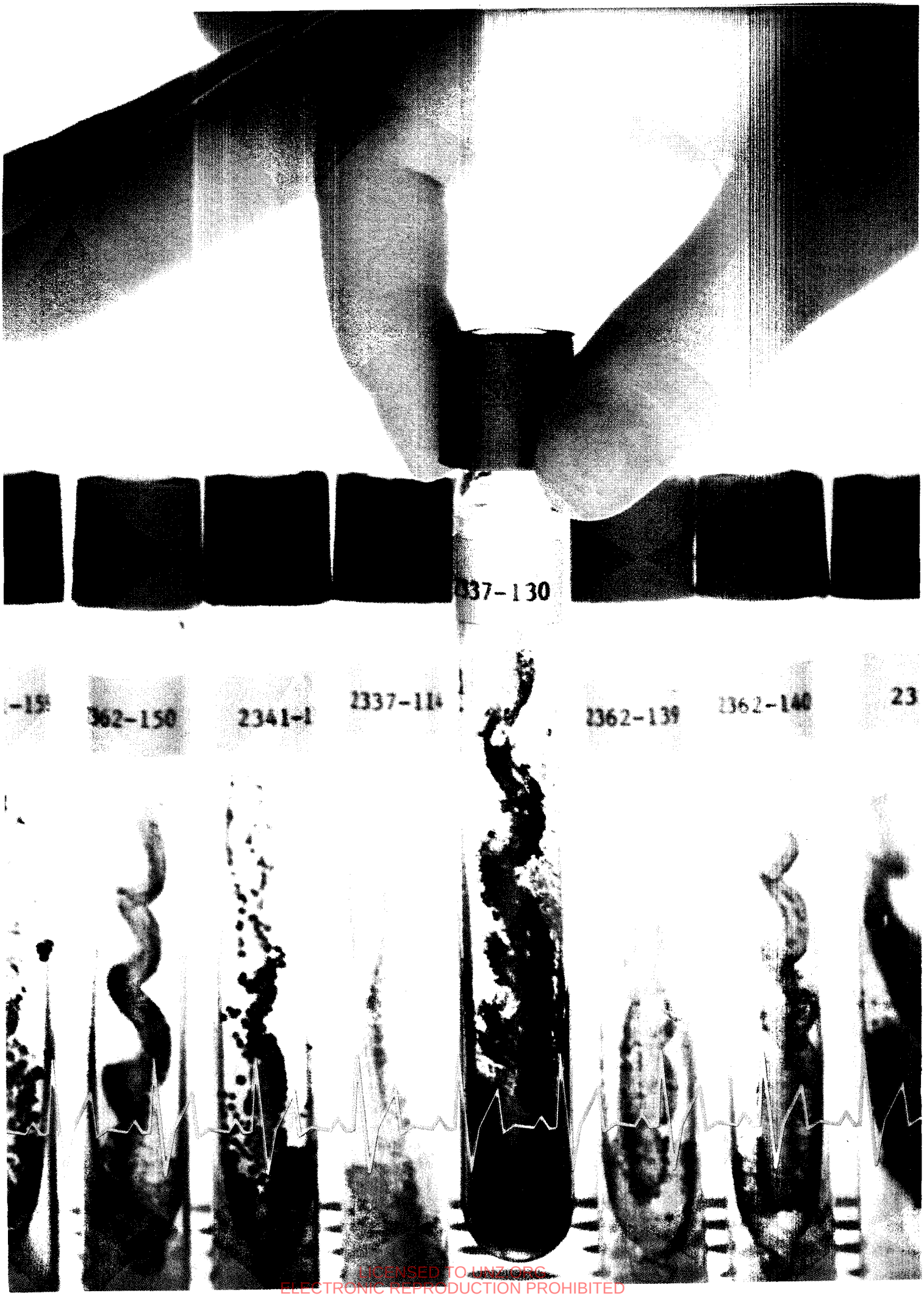

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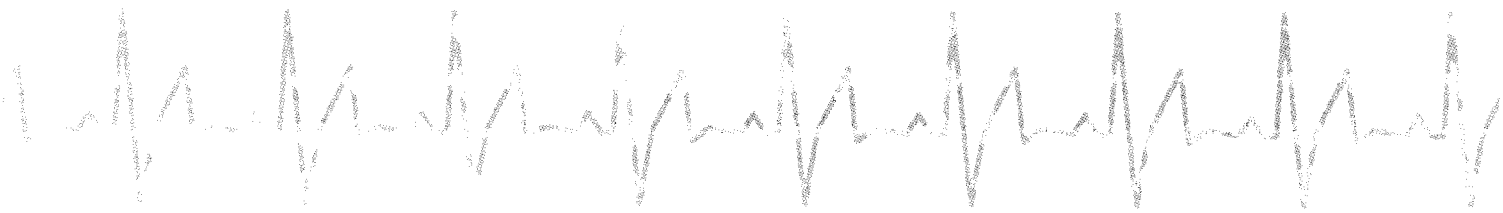

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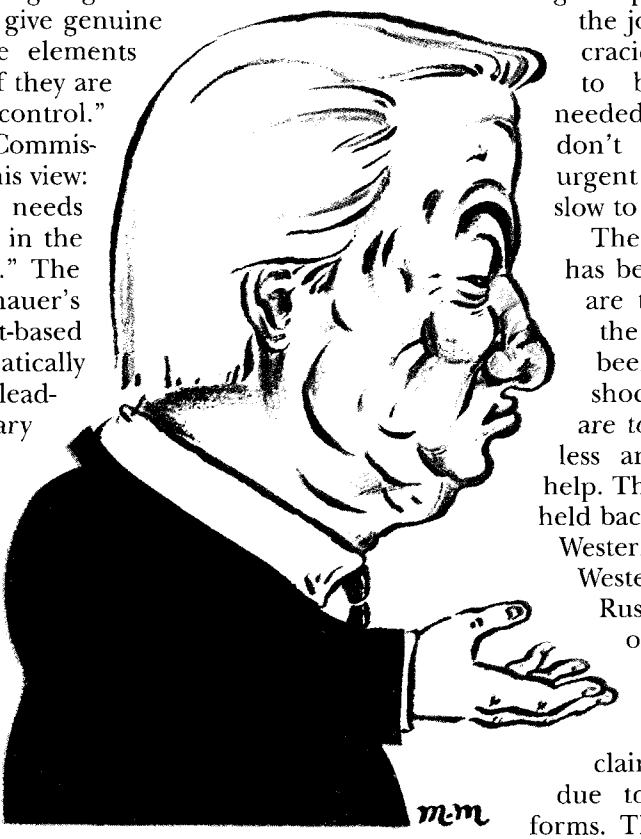
BETRAYAL

By Jeffrey Sachs

In 1948 German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer told U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson that the German people were in a state of "mental instability." If the IMF had been present, it would have concluded that any loans to Germany would be unduly risky under the circumstances. Acheson, thank goodness, saw it differently, arguing that "the 1920s teach us that we must give genuine and rapid support to those elements now in control of Germany if they are to be expected to retain control." John McCloy, the U.S. High Commissioner of Germany, echoed this view: "What German democracy needs and has never had is success in the eyes of the German people." The Marshall Plan helped Adenauer's democratic, Western, market-based vision to prevail, most dramatically when Adenauer retained the leadership by a single parliamentary vote in 1949.

U.S. policymakers today are fond of quoting this century's lessons, but not of following them in our policies toward Russia. Neither the Bush administration nor the Clinton administration has been ready to put real financial assistance behind Russia's reforms. The reluctance is even greater among the other G-7 countries. The problem has not been, as the conventional wisdom now has it, that our policy has been Russia first. The problem is that it has hardly been Russia at all.



BORIS YELTSIN BY MATTHEW MARTIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

On a rhetorical level, the West has twice made offers of large-scale assistance, $24 billion in 1992 and $28 billion in 1993. But it is one thing to announce aid, and another to deliver it. Only a tiny fraction of the announced aid has ever arrived, perhaps $4 billion of the $28 billion in 1993. In order to minimize budgetary outlays, the G-7 governments hoped the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and off-budget export credit agencies could do the job. The international bureaucracies, especially the IMF, proved to be without the leadership needed. The export credit agencies don't really meet Russia's most urgent needs, and have been very slow to deliver assistance.

The absence of Western support has been variously rationalized. We are told Russia's problem is that the reforms themselves have been too radical—too much shock, not enough therapy. We are told Russia's situation is hopeless anyway, with or without our help. The IMF insists that aid has been held back by Russian instability, not by Western inattention. Some insist that Western aid can have little sway on Russia's tumultuous events. Still others say Russia's reforms are already irreversible, so the greatest risks are past.

But the most preposterous claim is that Russia's instability is due to overzealous economic reforms. The Soviet Union was in economic decline for years before the arrival of Gorbachev, and was in steep decline for the six years of Gorbachev's rule. In 1991, before the arrival of the reformers, it was widely predicted that Soviet cities would succumb to hunger, if not starvation, by the winter. Oil production was falling sharply (from 560 million tons in 1989 to 461 million tons in 1991); the budget deficit reached 20 percent of GNP; the Soviet foreign debts were in default; farmers were hoarding grain; inflation was surging; the black market exchange rate was more

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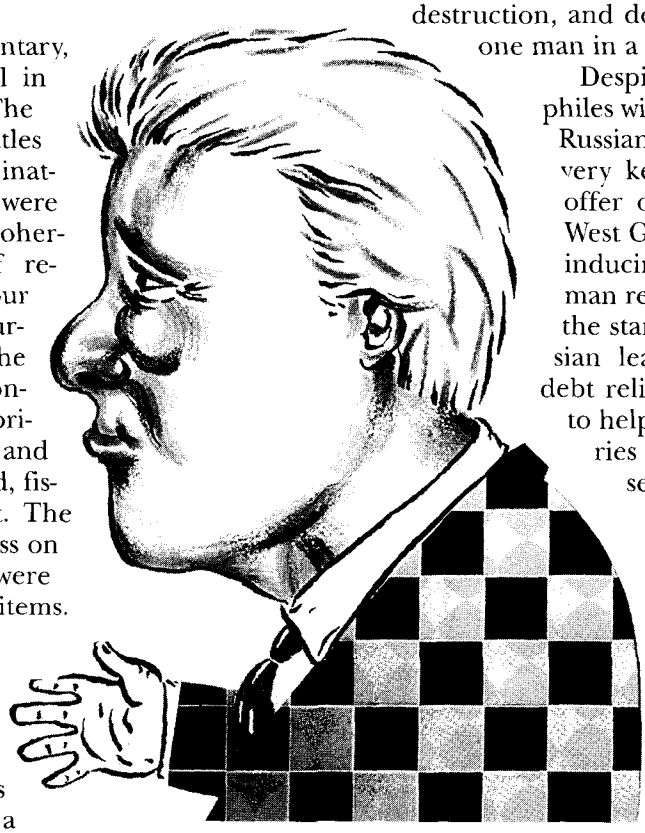
than thirty times the official price.

All this occurred before the West had ever heard the name Yegor Gaidar, Russia's economic reform leader in 1992. From the start, the Russian reformers constituted a small group facing a hostile, corrupt bureaucracy, a hard-line Supreme Soviet and a Cabinet in which conservatives always held a numerical majority. The reformers had the advantage of Boris Yeltsin's backing, executive power, society's desperation, the collapse of the old structures and the power of their ideas, bolstered by the contemporaneous experience in Eastern Europe.

The reformers also counted on the backing of large-scale Western aid, which never arrived. From a tactical point of view, the Western goal should have been the one articulated by Acheson, to help "the elements now in control ... to retain control." By helping their policies succeed, we could help them broaden their public support and give credence to the basic liberal concepts. We failed at each key turn, and have stood by as the reformers have seen their power slip away in the tumult.

Contrary to recent commentary, "shock therapy" did not fail in Russia. It was never tried. The combination of political battles inside Russia and Western inattention meant the reformers were never able to implement a coherent, sustained program of reforms. Their agenda had four items: stabilization of the currency, liberalization of the economy by ending price controls and central planning, privatization of state enterprises and the construction of a targeted, fiscally sound social safety net. The reformers made great progress on the middle items, but were blocked on the first and last items. Not coincidentally, those are the areas where Western aid could have made the most difference.



BILL CLINTON BY MATTHEW MARTIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

For several years, since well before 1992, Russia has been printing money at a remarkable rate so that the government can pay its bills. The money supply is now growing at 10 percent to 15 percent each month, leading to a monthly inflation rate of about the same level. Many kinds of spending should be slashed. Russian society is paying a fearful price in high inflation in order to keep providing subsidies to profligate state industry and state farms. But other kinds of spending, such as in the social sphere, should be increased.

Here is where Western help could make the biggest difference. By providing funds for the necessary parts of the budget, the West would directly reduce Russia's inflation rate, since the government wouldn't have to print money to cover those needs. The aid would also give the reformers the leverage in Russia's internal political debate to shift spending away from useless industrial subsidies to areas of real need, such as temporary welfare spending. The Marshall Plan provided precisely this kind of budgetary support, making it possible for democratic governments in postwar Europe to end high inflation, meet social needs and implement longer-term reforms.

Ending inflation would not by itself solve Russia's vast economic problems. A deep crisis will continue for years, as Russia cuts back its vast military-industrial complex. But ending inflation would reduce the pervasive sense of panic in Russia, and thereby help to stabilize the society. As Keynes put it in 1919 of a similar situation in Central Europe: "There is no subtler, no surer means of overturning the existing basis of society than to debauch the currency. The process engages all the hidden forces of economic law on the side of destruction, and does it in a manner which not one man in a million is able to diagnose."

Despite what world-weary Russophiles will tell you, the Soviet and then Russian leadership has always been very keen for such assistance. The offer of a few billion dollars from West Germany played a clear role in inducing Gorbachev to agree to German reunification within NATO. From the start of reforms in 1992 the Russian leadership has actively sought debt relief and new budgetary funds, to help keep the army fed, the factories operating and the dispossessed off the streets. The leadership knows well how the financial collapse and bread riots in 1917 contributed to insurrection and civil war.

Yet the West has been nearly oblivious to the reformers' needs for budgetary support, and the kind of leverage such support would have given them. In late 1991 when Gaidar first came to office, the G-7 governments disgracefully pressed the Russian government to continue servicing the Soviet foreign debt, at a time when the G-7 should have been working hard to provide the new government with fiscal breathing space. It took sixteen months to reach an accord on debt rescheduling that should have been established within weeks.

The IMF actually told the G-7 in January 1992 that Russia had no substantial financial needs for the year. It changed that view, under Russian protest, in March 1992, but still did nothing to help mobilize budgetary

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support for Russia. When the G-7 announced a $24 billion aid package in April 1992, the G-7 and IMF failed to follow through in the actual design and implementation of an aid program. In fact, most of the promised $24 billion was fluff—not real aid, but short-term trade credits on commercial terms that Russia would have to pay back in the near future.

The Russian reformers were buffeted by the emptiness of the Western aid offer. The announcement of the $24 billion was at first a huge boost. It gave the reformers stature with Yeltsin, the Parliament and the public. But when it turned out to be a mostly empty gesture, the tables were turned. The reformers were seen as stooges of the West, who had sold out Russia for empty promises.

An astute IMF would have understood the imminent risks in the spring, and would have found ways to speed the disbursements of aid. In practice, the IMF withheld its own support, on the grounds that things were already too risky. In a surrealistic episode, they agreed to a first loan of $1 billion during the summer, on the condition that the money not actually be used, but rather be held in reserves.

Without foreign financial backing, Gaidar began to search for domestic political support through compromises with "centrist" forces that were pushing for huge subsidies. Many Western pundits also called for "compromise," without understanding that Gaidar was effectively trading away the chance to end high inflation in 1992. The decisive blow came when Gaidar acquiesced to centrist demands that Viktor Gerashchenko, Gorbachev's Soviet Central Bank chief, take over control of the Russian Central Bank.

Gaidar's compromises helped sink stabilization. The steady reduction of inflation between February and August 1992 ceased with the renewal of money-printing, and returned to around 30 percent and rising. When Gaidar had a showdown with the hard-line People's Congress at the end of the year, he had little to show the public for his leadership. He was dumped, and replaced by Viktor Chernomyrdin, a Gorbachev-era apparatchik.

The situation might then have proved hopeless, but for the clear and present danger of hyperinflation. Yeltsin pushed hard for key reformers to be kept within the Cabinet. Under worsening financial conditions, Chernomyrdin agreed. The reformist finance minister Boris Federov fought for cuts in subsidies and for government controls on the wayward Central Bank. Chernomyrdin played the "centrist" hand, granting some victories to Federov and some to Gerashchenko. Federov staved off hyperinflation, and actually reduced the rate from 27 percent per month in January to around 12 percent in December. But with the money supply soaring, the reformers were still attacked at home and abroad for inflicting "shock therapy" on the population!

Even after Gaidar's departure, the West had tremendous potential influence to support Russian reforms, if it had cared to use it. The Russian leaders remained very interested in debt relief, budgetary support and long-term financing for industrial restructuring, particularly for the energy sector and for military-to-civilian conversion. The G-7 tabled another aid offer in April 1993, of $28 billion for the year, but as in 1992, there were few specific mechanisms established to deliver the funds, at least during 1993.

The real chance for a breakthrough to stabilization in 1993 came after Yeltsin's victory in the April referendum. With strong Western aid, the reformers could have made a political breakthrough. The IMF took exactly the opposite approach, laying out an excruciatingly slow program of aid ($1.5 billion in the spring, $1.5 billion in the fall and further funds at a later, unspecified date). With the ground cut from beneath him, Federov was stymied and Western leverage on behalf of reforms all but disappeared. By the summer, Central Bank Chairman Gerashchenko felt empowered to embark on a new, Communist-style adventure of currency confiscation, and Chernomyrdin backed him up, over the bitter objections of Federov. The last chance for the West in 1993 came in October, just after Yeltsin's coup. The moment was critical for three reasons. First, Federov had an enormous opportunity for action and was moving rapidly to clean up the abuses of the budget and Central Bank. Second, the public was highly disoriented, and needed a concrete sign of continuing reforms. Third, elections were on the horizon in just eight weeks.

The IMF came back to Moscow in October with a degree of obtuseness unmatched in its sorry history in Russia. It rejected any immediate support on the grounds that the Russians had violated the monetary targets in August, under completely different political conditions. It took pride in saying, explicitly, that the forthcoming election should be of no relevance to the institution's lending timetable. It announced that it would not give any support in the fall, and would disburse funds in the first quarter of 1994.

So the reformers went into the elections in December with rapidly growing public misunderstanding. They had avoided hyperinflation; yet they were blamed for the inflation nonetheless. They had fought corruption by ending many bureaucratic interventions in the economy, but they were blamed for corruption nonetheless. They had tried, over hard-line opposition, to shift government spending from wasteful subsidies to targeted social relief, but they were blamed for the absence of an adequate social safety net. They had succeeded in privatizing 80,000 enterprises, but were blamed for continued insecurity of property rights.

After the elections, Prime Minister Chernomyrdin, who had remained aloof from the vote, issued an attack on the reform team. He blamed the reformers for the election debacle despite the fact that he himself had commanded the government for the entire year, and had undermined the reformers on countless occasions. If Chernomyrdin put in the knife, the U.S. administration turned the blade, when Strobe Talbott

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

School Rules

Americans are worried about violent crime, more so than about any other problem. And of course they are worried about how to solve it. The Clinton administration has set up a task force to find solutions. This is a welcome move. Schools, too, need help in coping with the eruption of violence that threatens to turn them from safe havens into extensions of the street. But schools are also part of the solution to ending the violence afflicting our entire society.

Beginning in kindergarten and continuing all the way through grade 12, school is one of the chief places where youngsters learn about rules and responsibility. Do they learn that obeying rules gains them approval and respect and helps them succeed, whereas disobeying rules brings unpleasantness, punishment and failure? Or do they discover that they can get away with breaking rules—and, indeed, that if they do it with enough flair, they can become big heroes and leaders of their peer group?

Many of us remember how, in second or third grade, some kid who was trying to show off repeatedly yelled out bad words in class. If the teacher was unsuccessful in getting the kid to shape up, the principal appeared and led him off—and the kid didn't come back to class that day and maybe for several more. The rest of us didn't know what had happened, but we were sure it wasn't good, and we thought, "Thank God that wasn't me."

Beginning in kindergarten and continuing all the way through grade 12, school is one of the chief places where youngsters learn about rules and responsibility.

A lot of people would say that pulling a kid out of class—or having his parents come in, which sometimes also happened—is too stiff a punishment for a little thing like yelling out. But if youngsters don't learn that rules are to be taken seriously for little things, pretty soon you have to deal with much bigger problems, like shouting obscenities or hitting someone, and you have a school in which very little learning can take place.

But rules that are fairly and consistently enforced have another important function: They teach youngsters about taking responsibility for the results of their actions. And when they see that lesson reinforced time after time in school, that experience becomes a permanent part of their character.

Our schools today tolerate a tremendous amount of disruption and disorder. Kids do and say pretty much what they want, without fear of the consequences. In a recent article in the *Baltimore Sun* (October 22, 1993), a teacher reported that a student told her, "I'm going to come back and kill you. You can't do anything to me." There are rules against this kind of thing, but they are not being enforced because some people say that suspension or expulsion will not help the kids who are tossed out. That may be true in some cases. But it does a world of good for the majority of students, who can now enjoy an orderly and learning environment. And it's not just a question of reading and writing. When students see rules enforced, they are learning the habits and sense of responsibility that people need to live together civilly and safely.

What's to be done? First, we should adopt the idea put forth by John Cole, President of the Texas Federation of Teachers, of "zero tolerance" for the violation of rules and regulations that are necessary to carry on learning. Having zero tolerance means that students will find there are consequences for violating rules and that these consequences will increase with increasing numbers of violations and with their seriousness.

If we are to be able to follow through with consequences for seriously disruptive kids, we have to reexamine state regulations and court decisions dealing with suspension, expulsion and placement of students outside of regular classes. In recent years these decisions and regulations have made it difficult or impossible to remove even the most disruptive student from regular classes. We should not put these kids out on the street, but we do need to create special classes or facilities for students who are so violent or disruptive that they prevent others from learning.

We are unwilling to suspend or expel students in this country, or even put them into separate facilities, because we fear violating their rights. But we have to realize that no other country permits a small number of kids to destroy the learning of the majority. No matter what kind of standards and curriculum we set up, if we allow one or two kids to stay in a class where they ruin learning for everyone else, we can forget about achieving world-class educational standards. And if what kids learn in school is that any rule can be broken at any time, we will continue down the road to destroying our civil society.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1994 by Albert Shanker.

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quipped that Russia needed "less shock, more therapy." This apparent rejection of the reform strategy came just as Yeltsin was considering the formation of the next government.

One common line of attack on the reformers is that they should have adopted the Chinese approach, rather than "shock therapy." After all, China is booming. Why not Russia? Unfortunately, there is little in China's experience that is directly applicable. Deng Xiaoping's China in 1978 was a peasant society in which more than 70 percent of the population consisted of subsistence farmers. Seven hundred million peasants were willing to bear incredible hardships for pennies a day, and enough found their way to the booming export manufactures of the coastal regions. Russia and Eastern Europe are utterly different: urban, industrialized, with unaffordable social guarantees. In Russia and Eastern Europe it is not enough to grant the peasants economic freedom; the state enterprise and subsidy system must be cut down to size, to avoid hyperinflation and make room for private business.

The last ten years have made clear that gradual reform is a myth in Eurasia. Gorbachev tried it for six years, and left the country bankrupt. The situation is even more desperate in neighboring Ukraine, where hard-line Communists never ceded power to reformers. Subsidies were not cut; enterprises were not privatized. Today, Ukraine has inflation of nearly 100 percent per month and wages of five dollars per month at the black market exchange rate. Poland, the Czech Republic and the Baltic States, in contrast, have seen rapid gains. After four years of "shock therapy," Poland is stable, democratic and the fastest growing economy in all of Europe, with a stock market that rose by more than 700 percent this year. The same *Business Week* this month that editorializes against "shock therapy" in Russia describes Poland as Europe's next economic "tiger."

Almost all Western observers get it half right and half wrong in thinking about Russia. When Vice President Al Gore made a dramatic statement in Moscow last month that the IMF had let Russia down by insisting on excessively tough reforms, he was right that Western support has been insufficient, but mistaken in blaming overly zealous reforms. When Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen countered that the IMF was not to blame, since the reforms had not gone far enough, this again was half right and half wrong. Russia needs more reforms, but it also needs much more effective international help than the IMF has offered or coordinated.

Some say that no matter how much aid is given, Russia's problems are simply insoluble. It's true we can't shape the future of Russia's economy. But we can have a decisive effect on monetary stability, as we did in postwar Germany. Here's how. The Russian budget deficit is now around 8 percent of GNP, nearly all of which is covered by printing money. The money-printing is fueling a monthly inflation of between 10 percent and 15 percent. The main trick for 1994 is to shift the method of budget financing, from money-printing to noninflationary methods, such as selling treasury bills and borrowing from abroad. The aim is to reduce money printing to 2 percent of GNP. This would dramatically slow money supply growth, so that inflation would drop to around 2 percent to 3 percent per month by the end of this year.

How can this be done? Foreign assistance should cover around 4 percent of GNP in budgetary spending, or about $14 billion directly for the Russian budget. Domestic Russian bonds can cover another 2 percent. Money-printing would be around 2 percent of GNP. Why not simply ask the Russians to cut more spending or raise more taxes? There's the rub. While Russia should certainly cut subsidies, it must also sharply *increase* social spending, by around 4 percent of GNP. But how can it do this if the budget deficit is already so large? Russia must shift spending domestically from subsidies (down 4 percent of GNP) to social policy (up 4 percent of GNP), while receiving the foreign assistance to help cover the deficit. Russia is simply unable to cut spending by enough to close the deficit and meet the extreme social needs at the same time.

Obviously, a substantial restructuring of the budget and its financing would require strong Russian and Western political leadership, massive coordination and technical sophistication. There was never any chance it could be put together by IMF missions talking with middle-level Russian officials. It could only be done at the top levels of the Russian government and the G-7. Unfortunately, in two years of Russian reform, the G-7 leadership has never engaged in this kind of detailed coordination. Senior U.S. officials have spent a few days in Moscow, not the weeks needed to set the job on course. And so Clinton arrived in Moscow this week too late to prevent the present dire circumstances, with too little apparently on his agenda. There is still time to turn things around, but not by an administration too wary of foreign involvement.

Above all, Clinton should not console himself with the thought that nothing too serious can happen in Russia. Many Western policymakers have confidently predicted that if the reformers leave now, they will be back in a year, after the Communists once again prove themselves unable to govern. This might happen, but chances are it will not. History has probably given the Clinton administration one chance for bringing Russia back from the brink; and it reveals an alarmingly simple pattern. The moderate Girondists did not follow Robespierre back into power. With rampant inflation, social disarray and falling living standards, revolutionary France opted for Napoleon instead. In revolutionary Russia, Aleksandr Kerensky did not return to power after Lenin's policies and civil war had led to hyperinflation. The disarray of the early 1920s opened the way for Stalin's rise to power. Nor was Bruning's government given another chance in Germany once Hitler came to power in 1933. •

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The fallacies of the language mavens.

GRAMMAR PUSS

By Steven Pinker

Language is a human instinct. All societies have complex language, and everywhere the languages use the same kinds of grammatical machinery, such as nouns, verbs, auxiliaries and agreement. Normal children develop language without conscious effort or formal lessons, and by the age of 3 they speak in fluent grammatical sentences. Brain damage or congenital conditions can make a retarded person a linguistic savant or a person of high intelligence unable to speak. All this has led many scientists to conclude that there are specialized circuits in the brain, and perhaps specialized genes, that create the gift of articulate speech.

But when you read about language in the popular press, you get a very different picture. Johnny can't construct a grammatical sentence. As educational standards decline and pop culture disseminates the inarticulate ravings and unintelligible patois of surfers, rock stars and valley girls, we are turning into a nation of functional illiterates: misusing "hopefully," confusing "lie" and "lay," treating "bummer" as a sentence, letting our participles dangle.

What is behind this contradiction? If language is as instinctive to humans as dam-building is to beavers, if the design of syntax is coded in our DNA, why does the average American sound like a gibbering fool every time he opens his mouth or puts pen to paper?

The most benign explanation for this apparent contradiction is that the words "rule" and "grammar" have very different meanings to a scientist and to a layperson. The rules people learn (or, more likely, fail to learn) in school are called "prescriptive" rules, prescribing how one *ought* to talk. Scientists studying language propose "descriptive" rules, describing how people *do* talk. Prescriptive and descriptive grammar are simply different things. To a scientist, the fundamental fact of human language is its sheer improbability. Most objects in the universe—rocks, worms, cows, cars—cannot talk. Even in humans, speech comprises an infinitesimal fraction of the noises people's mouths are capable of making. I can arrange a combination of words that explains how octopuses make love or how to build an atom bomb; rearrange the words in even the most minor way, and the result is a sentence with a different meaning or, more likely, word salad. How are we to account for this miracle? What would it take to build a device that could duplicate human language?

Obviously, you would need to build in rules. But *prescriptive* rules? Imagine trying to build a talking machine by designing it to obey rules such as "Don't split infinitives" or "Never begin a sentence with 'because.' " It would just sit there. Prescriptive rules are useless without the much more fundamental rules that create the sentences to begin with. These rules are never mentioned in style manuals because the authors correctly assume that anyone capable of reading the manuals must already know them. No one, not even a valley girl has to be told not to say "Apples the eat boy" or "Who did you meet John and?" or the vast, vast majority of the trillions of mathematically possible combinations of words. So when a scientist considers all the high-tech mental machinery needed to order words into everyday sentences, prescriptive rules are, at best, inconsequential decorations.

So there is no contradiction, after all, in saying that every normal person can speak grammatically (in the sense of systematically) and ungrammatically (in the sense of nonprescriptively), just as there is no contradiction in saying that a taxi obeys the laws of physics but breaks the laws of Massachusetts.

So whence the popular anxiety? This is where a less than benign explanation comes in. Someone, somewhere, must be making decisions about "correct English" for the rest of us. Who? There is no English Language Academy. The legislators of "correct English," in fact, are an informal network of copy editors, dictionary usage panelists, style manual writers, English teachers, essayists and pundits. Their authority, they claim, comes from their dedication to carrying out standards that maximize the language's clarity, logic, consistency, precision, stability and expressive range. William Safire, who writes the weekly column "On Language" for the *New York Times Magazine*, calls himself a "language maven," from the Yiddish word meaning expert, and this gives us a convenient la-

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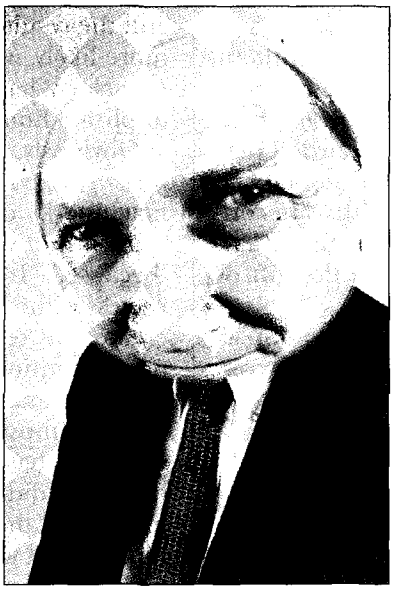
bel for the entire group.

To whom I say: Maven, shmaven! Kibitzers and nudniks is more like it. For here are the remarkable facts. Most of the prescriptive rules of the language mavens are bits of folklore that originated for screwball reasons several hundred years ago. For as long as they have existed, speakers have flouted them, spawning identical plaints about the imminent decline of the language century after century. The rules conform neither to logic nor to tradition, and if they were ever followed they would force writers into fuzzy, clumsy, incomprehensible prose, in which certain thoughts are not expressible at all. Indeed, most of the "ignorant errors" these rules are supposed to correct display an elegant logic and an acute sensitivity to the grammatical texture of the language, to which the mavens are oblivious.

The scandal of the language mavens began in the eighteenth century. The London dialect had become an important world language, and scholars began to criticize it as they would any institution, in part to question the authority of the aristocracy. Latin was considered the language of enlightenment and was offered as an ideal of precision and logic to which English should aspire. The period also saw unprecedented social mobility, and anyone who wanted to distinguish himself as cultivated had to master the best version of English. These trends created a demand for handbooks and style manuals, which were soon shaped by market forces: the manuals tried to outdo one another by including greater numbers of increasingly fastidious rules that no refined person could afford to ignore. Most of the hobgoblins of prescriptive grammar (don't split infinitives, don't end a sentence with a preposition) can be traced back to these eighteenth-century fads.



Of course, forcing modern speakers of English to not—whoops, not to—split an infinitive because it isn't done in Latin makes about as much sense as forcing modern residents of England to wear laurels and togas. Julius Caesar could not have split an infinitive if he had wanted to. In Latin the infinitive is a single word such as "*făcere*," a syntactic atom. But in English, which prefers to build sentences around many simple words instead of a few complicated ones, the infinitive is composed of two words. Words, by definition, are rearrangeable units, and there is no conceivable reason why an adverb should not come between them:

> Space—the final frontier.... These are the voyages of the starship *Enterprise*. Its five-year mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before.

To "go boldly" where no man has gone before? Beam me up, Scotty; there's no intelligent life down here. As for outlawing sentences that end with a preposition (impossible in Latin for reasons irrelevant to English)—as Winston Churchill said, "It is a rule up with which we should not put."

But once introduced, a prescriptive rule is very hard to eradicate, no matter how ridiculous. Inside the writing establishment, the rules survive by the same dynamic that perpetuates ritual genital mutilations and college fraternity hazing. Anyone daring to overturn a rule by example must always worry that readers will think he or she is ignorant of the rule, rather than challenging it. Perhaps most importantly, since prescriptive rules are so psychologically unnatural that only those with access to the right schooling can abide by them, they serve as shibboleths, differentiating the elite from the rabble. Throughout the country people have spoken a dialect of English, some of whose features date to the Early Modern English period, that H. L. Mencken called The American Language. It had the misfortune of not becoming the standard of government and education, and large parts of the "grammar" curriculum in U.S. schools have been dedicated to stigmatizing it as sloppy speech.

Frequently the language mavens claim that nonstandard American English is not just different, but less sophisticated and logical. The case, they would have to admit, is hard to make for nonstandard irregular verbs such as "drag/drug" (and even more so for conversions to regularity such as "feeled" and "growed"). After all, in "correct" English, Richard Lederer noted, "Today we speak, but first we spoke; some faucets leak, but never loke. Today we write, but first we wrote; we bite our tongues, but never bote." At first glance, the mavens would seem to have a better argument when it comes to the loss of conjugational distinctions in "He don't" and "We was." But then, this has been the trend in standard English for centuries. No one gets upset that we no longer distinguish the second person singular form of verbs, as in "thou sayest." And by this criterion it is the nonstandard dialects that are superior, because they provide their speakers with second person plural pronouns like "y'all" and "youse."

At this point, defenders of the standard are likely to pull out the notorious double negative, as in "I can't get no satisfaction." Logically speaking, they teach, the two negatives cancel out each other; Mr. Jagger is actually saying that he is satisfied. The song should be titled "I Can't Get *Any* Satisfaction." But this reasoning is not satisfactory. Hundreds of languages require their speakers to use a negative element in the context of a negated verb. The so-called "double negative," far from being a corruption, was the norm in Chaucer's Middle English, and negation in standard French, as in "*Je ne sais pas*" where "*ne*" and "*pas*" are both negative, is a familiar con-

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temporary example. Come to think of it, standard English is really no different. What do "any," "even" and "at all" mean in the following sentences?

> I didn't buy any lottery tickets. I didn't eat even a single french fry. I didn't eat junk food at all today.

Clearly, not much: you can't use them alone, as the following strange sentences show:

> I bought any lottery tickets. I ate even a single french fry. I ate junk food at all today.

What these words are doing is exactly what "no" is doing in nonstandard English, such as in the equivalent "I didn't buy no lottery tickets"—agreeing with the negated verb. The slim difference is that nonstandard English co-opted the word "no" as the agreement element, whereas standard English co-opted the word "any."

A tin ear for stress and melody along with an obliviousness to the principles of discourse and rhetoric are important tools of the trade for the language maven. Consider an alleged atrocity committed by today's youth: the expression "I could care less." The teenagers are trying to express disdain, the adults note, in which case they should be saying "I couldn't care less." If they could care less than they do, that means that they really do care, the opposite of what they are trying to say. But the argument is bogus. Listen to how the two versions are pronounced:

COULDN'T care	I
LE	CARE
i ESS.	LE
	could ESS.

The melodies and stresses are completely different, and for a good reason. The second version is not illogical, it's *sarcastic*. The point of sarcasm is that by making an assertion that is manifestly false or accompanied by ostentatiously mannered intonation, one deliberately implies its opposite. A good paraphrase is, "Oh yeah, as if there were something in the world that I care less about."

Through the ages, language mavens have deplored the way English speakers convert nouns into verbs. The following verbs have all been denounced in this century: to caveat, to input, to host, to nuance, to access, to chair, to dialogue, to showcase, to progress, to parent, to intrigue, to contact, to impact.

As you can see, they range from varying degrees of awkwardness to the completely unexceptionable. In fact, easy conversion of nouns to verbs has been part of English grammar for centuries. I have estimated that about a fifth of all English verbs were originally nouns. Consider the human body: you can "head" a committee, "scalp" the missionary, "eye" a babe, "stomach" someone's complaints and so on—virtually every body part can be "verbed" (including several that cannot be printed in a family journal of opinion).

What's the problem? The concern seems to be that fuzzy-minded speakers are eroding the distinction between nouns and verbs. But once again, the person on the street is not getting any respect. A simple quirk of everyday usage shows why the accusation is untrue. Take the baseball term "to fly out," a verb that comes from the noun "pop fly." The past form is "flied," not "flew" and "flown"; no mere mortal has ever flown out to center field. Similarly, in using the verb-from-noun "to ring the city" (form a ring around), people say "ringed," not "rang." Speakers' preference for the regular form with "-ed" shows that they tacitly keep track of the fact that the verbs came from nouns. They avoid irregular forms like "flew out" because they sense that the baseball verb "to fly" is different from the ordinary verb "to fly" (what birds do): the first is a verb based on a noun root, the second, a verb with a verb root.

The most remarkable aspect of the special status of verbs-from-nouns is that everyone feels it. I have tried out examples on hundreds of people—college students, people without college educations, children as young as 4. They all behave like good intuitive grammarians: they inflect verbs that come from nouns differently than plain old verbs. So is there anyone, anywhere, who does not grasp the principle? Yes—the language mavens. Uniformly, the style manuals bungle their explanations of "flied out" and similar lawful examples.

I am obliged to discuss one more example: the much vilified "hopefully." A sentence such as "Hopefully, the treaty will pass" is said to be a grave error. The adverb "hopefully" comes from the adjective "hopeful," meaning "in a manner full of hope." Therefore, the mavens say, it should be used only when the sentence refers to a person who is doing something in a hopeful manner. If it is the writer or reader who is hopeful, one should say, "It is hoped that the treaty will pass," or "If hopes are realized, the treaty will pass," or "I hope the treaty will pass."

Now consider the following:

(1) It is simply not true that an English adverb must indicate the manner in which the actor performs the action. Adverbs come in two kinds: "verb phrase" adverbs such as "carefully," which do refer to the actor, and "sentence" adverbs such as "frankly," which indicate the attitude of the speaker toward the content of the sentence. Other examples of sentence adverbs are "accordingly," "basically," "confidentially," "happily," "mercifully," "roughly," "supposedly" and "understandably." Many (such as "happily") come from verb phrase adverbs, and they are virtually never ambiguous in context. The use of "hopefully" as a sentence adverb, which has been around for at least sixty years, is a perfectly sensible example.

(2) The suggested alternatives, "It is hoped that" and "If hopes are realized," display four sins of bad writing: passive voice, needless words, vagueness, pomposity.

(3) The suggested alternatives do not mean the same thing as "hopefully," so the ban would leave certain

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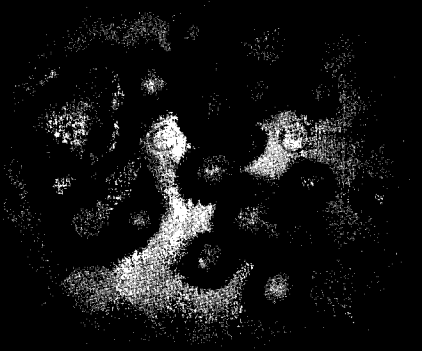
The Big Bad Wolf

The Wicked Witch

The Thing Under the Bed



The Measles

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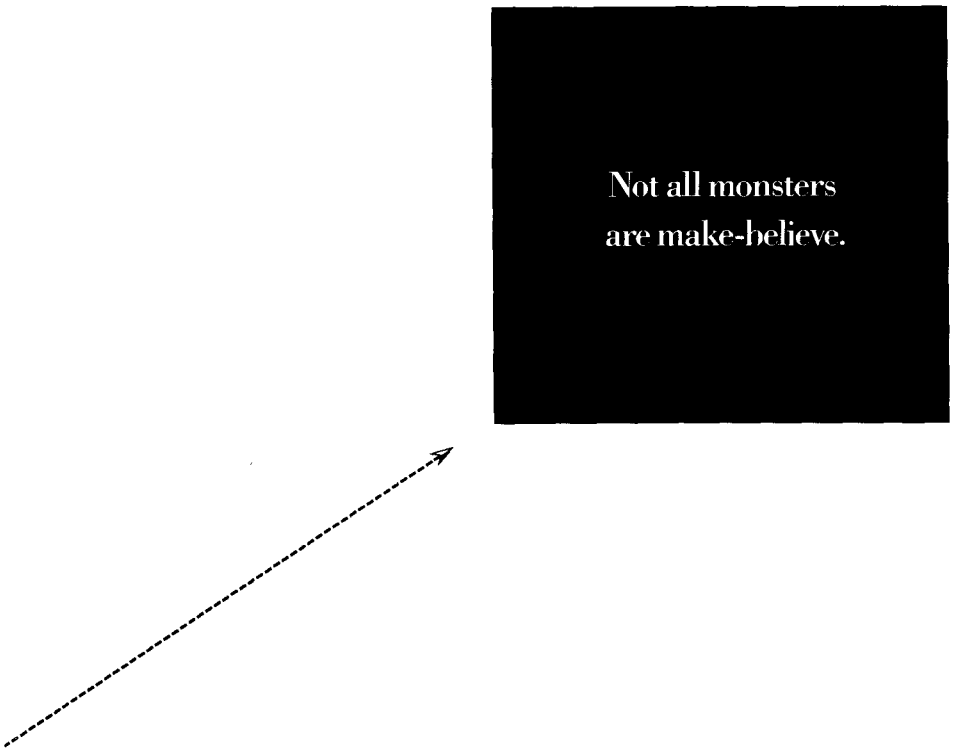

Measles is a very *real* threat to your child. Complications can lead to blindness or even brain damage. But measles can be prevented. That's why we're giving millions of dollars through 1996 to educate and encourage parents to vaccinate their kids. Preventive care is included in many Aetna Health Plans programs. After all, prevention is the best form of health care. For our brochure, "A Parent's Guide to Childhood Vaccinations," call 1-800-AETNA-HC.

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thoughts unexpressible. "Hopefully" makes a hopeful prediction, whereas "I hope that" and "It is hoped that" merely describe certain people's mental states. Thus you can say, "I hope the treaty will pass, but it isn't likely," but it would be odd to say, "Hopefully, the treaty will pass, but it isn't likely."

(4) We are supposed to use "hopefully" only as a verb phrase adverb, as in the following:

> Hopefully, Larry hurled the ball toward the basket with one second left in the game.
> Hopefully, Melvin turned the record over and sat back down on the couch eleven centimeters closer to Ellen.

Call me uncouth, call me ignorant, but these sentences do not belong to any language that I speak.

I have taken these examples from generic schoolmarms, copy editors and writers of irate letters to newspaper ombudsmen. The more famous language mavens come in two temperaments: Jeremiahs and Sages.

The Jeremiahs express their bitter laments and righteous prophesies of doom. The best-known is the film and theater critic John Simon. Here is a representative opening to one of his language columns:

> "The English language is being treated nowadays exactly as slave traders once handled the merchandise in their slave ships, or as the inmates of concentration camps were dealt with by their Nazi jailers."

What grammatical horror could have inspired this tasteless comparison, you might ask? It was Tip O'Neill's redundantly referring to his "fellow colleagues."

Speaking of the American Black English dialect, Simon says:

> Why should we consider some, usually poorly educated, subculture's notion of the relationship between sound and meaning? And how could a grammar—any grammar—possibly describe that relationship?... As for "I be," "you be," "he be," etc., which should give us all the heebie-jeebies, these may indeed be comprehensible, but they go against all accepted classical and modern grammars and are the product not of a language with roots in history but of ignorance of how language works.

This, of course, is nonsense from beginning to end (Black English is uncontroversially a language with its own systematic grammar), but there is no point in refuting this malicious know-nothing, for he is not participating in any sincere discussion. Simon has simply discovered the trick used with great effectiveness by certain comedians, talk show hosts and punk rock musicians: people of modest talent can attract attention, at least for a while, by being unrelentingly offensive.

The Sages, on the other hand, typified by the late Theodore Bernstein and by William Safire himself, take a moderate, commonsense approach to matters of usage, and they tease their victims with wit rather than savaging them with invective. I enjoy reading the Sages, and have nothing but awe for a pen like Safire's that can summarize the content of an anti-pornography statute as, "It isn't the teat, it's the tumidity." But the sad fact is that even Safire, the closest thing we have to an enlightened language pundit, misjudges the linguistic sophistication of the common speaker and as a result misses the target in most of his commentaries and advice. To prove this charge, I will walk you through parts of one of his columns, from the October 4, 1992, *New York Times Magazine*.

The first story was a nonpartisan analysis of supposed pronoun case errors made by the two candidates in the 1992 presidential election. George Bush had recently adopted the slogan "Who do you trust?," alienating schoolteachers across the nation who noted that "who" is a subject pronoun and the question is asking about the object of "trust." One would say "You do trust him," not "You do trust he," and so the question word should be "whom," not "who."

In reply, one might point out that the "who/whom" distinction is a relic of the English case system, abandoned by nouns centuries ago and found today only among pronouns in distinctions such as "he/him." Even among pronouns, the old distinction between subject "ye" and object "you" has vanished, leaving "you" to play both roles and "ye" as sounding archaic. Though "whom" has outlived "ye," it is clearly moribund, and already sounds pretentious in most spoken contexts. No one demands of Bush that he say, "Whom do ye trust?" If the language can bear the loss of "ye," why insist on clinging to "whom"?

Safire, with his reasonable attitude toward usage, recognizes the problem, and proposes:

> Safire's Law of Who/Whom, which forever solves the problem troubling writers and speakers caught between the pedantic and the incorrect: "When *whom* is correct, recast the sentence." Thus, instead of changing his slogan to "*Whom do you trust?*"—making him sound like a hypereducated Yalie stiff—Mr. Bush would win back the purist vote with "Which candidate do you trust?"

Telling people to avoid a problematic construction sounds like common sense, but in the case of object questions with "who," it demands an intolerable sacrifice. People ask questions about the objects of verbs and prepositions *a lot*. Consider the kinds of questions one might ask a child in ordinary conversation: "Who did we see on the way home?," "Who did you play with outside tonight?," "Who did you sound like?"

Safire's advice is to change such questions to "Which person...?" or "Which child...?" But the advice would have people violate the most important maxim of good prose: omit needless words. It also subverts the supposed goal of rules of usage, which is to allow people to express their thoughts as clearly and precisely as possible. A question such as "Who did we see on the way home?" can embrace one person, many people or any combination or number of adults, babies and familiar dogs. Any specific substitution such as "Which person?" forecloses some of these possibilities. Extremism in defense of liberty is no vice. Safire should have taken his observation about "whom" to its logical conclusion and advised the president that there is no reason to

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change the slogan, at least no grammatical reason.

Turning to the Democrats, Safire gets on Bill Clinton's case, as he puts it, for asking voters to "give Al Gore and I a chance to bring America back." No one would say "give I a break," because the indirect object of "give" must have objective case. So it should be "give Al Gore and me a chance."

Probably no "grammatical error" has received as much scorn as the "misuse" of pronoun case inside conjunctions (phrases with two parts joined by "and" or "or"). What teenager has not been corrected for saying "Me and Jennifer are going to the mall"? The standard story is that the object pronoun "me" does not belong in the subject position—no one would say "Me is going to the mall"—so it should be "Jennifer and I." People tend to misremember the advice as, "When in doubt, say 'so-and-so and I,' not 'so-and-so and me,' " so they unthinkingly overapply it, resulting in hyper-corrected solecisms like "give Al Gore and I a chance" and the even more despised "between you and I."

But if the person on the street is so good at avoiding "Me is going" and "Give I a break," and even former Rhodes Scholars and Ivy League professors can't seem to avoid "Me and Jennifer are going" and "Give Al and I a chance," might it be the mavens that misunderstand English grammar, not the speakers? The mavens' case about case rests on one assumption: if a conjunction phrase has a grammatical feature like subject case, every word inside that phrase has to have that grammatical feature, too. But that is just false.

"Jennifer" is singular; you say "Jennifer is," not "Jennifer are." The pronoun "she" is singular; you say "She is," not "She are." But the conjunction "She and Jennifer" is not singular, it's plural; you say "She and Jennifer are," not "She and Jennifer is." So a conjunction can have a different grammatical number from the pronouns inside it. Why, then, must it have the same grammatical *case* as the pronouns inside it? The answer is that it need not. A conjunction is not grammatically equivalent to any of its parts. If John and Marsha met, it does not mean that John met and that Marsha met. If voters give Clinton and Gore a chance, they are not giving Gore his own chance, added on to the chance they are giving Clinton; they are giving the entire ticket a chance. So just because "Al Gore and I" is an object that requires object case, it does not mean that "I" is an object that requires object case. By the logic of grammar, the pronoun is free to have any case it wants.

In his third story Safire deconstructs a breathless quote from Barbra Streisand, describing tennis star Andre Agassi: "He's very, very intelligent; very, very, sensitive, very evolved;... He plays like a Zen master. It's very in the moment."

Safire speculates on Streisand's use of the word "evolved": "its change from the active to passive voice—from 'he *evolved from* the Missing Link' to 'He *is evolved*'—was probably influenced by the adoption of *involved* as a compliment."

These kinds of derivations have been studied intensively in linguistics, but Safire shows here that he does not appreciate how they work. He seems to think that people change words by being reminded of rhyming ones—"evolved" from "involved," a kind of malapropism. But in fact people are not that literal-minded. New usages (such as "to fly out") are based not on rhymes, but on systematic rules that change the grammatical behavior of dozens of words in the same precise ways.

Thus Safire's suggestion that "very evolved" is based on "involved" does not work at all. For one thing, if you're involved, it means that something involves you (you're the object), whereas if you're evolved, it means that you have been doing some evolving (you're the subject). The problem is that the conversion of "evolved from" to "very evolved" is not a switch from the active voice of a verb to the passive voice, as in "Andre beat Boris" to "Boris was beaten by Andre." To passivize a verb you convert the direct object into a subject, so "is evolved" could only have been passivized from "Something evolved Andre"—which does not exist in contemporary English. Safire's explanation is like saying you can take "Bill bicycled from Lexington" and change it to "Bill is bicycled" and then to "Bill is very bicycled."

This breakdown is a good illustration of one of the main scandals of the language mavens: they show lapses in elementary problems of grammatical analysis, like figuring out the part-of-speech category of a word. In analyzing "very evolved," Safire refers to the active and passive voices, two forms of a verb. But the preceding adverb "very" is an unmistakable tip-off that "evolved" is not being used as a verb at all, but as an adjective. Safire was misled because adjectives can look like verbs in the passive voice, and are clearly related to them, but they are not the same thing. This is the ambiguity behind the joke in the Bob Dylan lyric, "They'll stone you when you're riding in your car; They'll stone you when you're playing your guitar.... Everybody must get stoned."

This discovery steers us toward the real source of "evolved." There is a lively rule in English that takes the participle of certain intransitive verbs and creates a corresponding adjective:

a leaf that has fallen —> a fallen leaf
snow that has drifted —> the drifted snow
a man who has traveled widely —> a widely traveled man

Take this rule and apply it to "a tennis player who

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has evolved," and you get "an evolved tennis player." This solution also allows us to make sense of Streisand's meaning. When a verb is converted from the active to the passive voice, the verb's meaning is conserved: "Dog bites man" = "Man is bitten by dog." But when a verb is converted to an adjective, the adjective can acquire idiosyncratic nuances. Not every woman who has fallen is a fallen woman, and if someone stones you you are not necessarily stoned. We all evolved from a missing link, but not all of us are evolved in the sense of being more spiritually sophisticated than our contemporaries.

Safire then goes on to rebuke Streisand for "very in the moment":

> This *very* calls attention to the use of a preposition or a noun as a modifier, as in "It's very *in*," or "It's very *New York*," or the ultimate fashion compliment, "It's very *you*." To be very *in the moment* (perhaps a variation of *of the moment* or *up to the minute*) appears to be a loose translation of the French *au courant*, variously translated as "up to date, fashionable, with-it" . . .

Once again, by patronizing Streisand's language, Safire has misanalyzed its form and its meaning. He has not noticed that:

(1) The word "very" is not connected to the preposition "in"; it's connected to the entire prepositional phrase "in the moment."

(2) Streisand is not using the intransitive "in," with its special sense of "fashionable"; she is using the conventional transitive "in," with a noun phrase object "the moment."

(3) Her use of a prepositional phrase as if it were an adjective to describe some mental or emotional state follows a common pattern in English: "under the weather," "out of character," "off the wall," "in the dumps," "out to lunch," "on the ball" and "out of his mind."

(4) It's unlikely that Streisand was trying to say that Agassi is au courant, or fashionable; that would be a put-down implying shallowness, not a compliment. Her reference to Zen makes her meaning clear: that Agassi is good at shutting out distractions and concentrating on the game or person he is involved with at that moment.

The foibles of the language mavens, then, can be blamed on two blind spots: a gross underestimation of the linguistic wherewithal of the common person and an ignorance of the science of language—not just technical linguistics, but basic knowledge of the constructions and idioms of English, and of how people use them.

Unlike some academics in the '60s, I am not saying that concern for grammar and composition are tools to perpetuate an oppressive status quo and that The People should be liberated to write however they please. Some aspects of how people express themselves in some settings *are* worth trying to change. What I am calling for is a more thoughtful discussion of language and how people use it, replacing *bubbe-maises* (old wives' tales) with the best scientific knowledge available. It is ironic that the jeremiads wailing about how sloppy language leads to sloppy thought are themselves hairballs of loosely associated factoids and tangled non sequiturs. All the examples of verbal behavior that the complainer takes exception to for any reason are packed together and coughed up as proof of The Decline of the Language: teenage slang, sophistry, regional variations in pronunciation and vocabulary, bureaucratic bafflegab, poor spelling and punctuation, pseudo-errors like "hopefully," government euphemism, nonstandard grammar like "ain't," misleading advertising and so on (not to mention occasional witticisms that go over the complainer's head).

I hope to have convinced you of two things. Many prescriptive rules are just plain dumb and should be deleted from the handbooks. And most of standard English is just that, standard, in the sense of standard units of currency or household voltages. It is just common sense that people should be encouraged to learn the dialect that has become the standard in their society. But there is no need to use terms like "bad grammar," "fractured syntax" and "incorrect usage" when referring to rural, black and other nonstandard dialects (even if you dislike "politically correct" euphemism): the terms are not only insulting, but scientifically inaccurate.

The aspect of language use that is most worth changing is the clarity and style of written prose. The human language faculty was not designed for putting esoteric thoughts on paper for the benefit of strangers, and this makes writing a difficult craft that must be mastered through practice, feedback and intensive exposure to good examples. There are excellent manuals of composition that discuss these skills with great wisdom—but note how their advice concentrates on important practical tips like "omit needless words" and "revise extensively," not on the trivia of split infinitives and slang.

As for slang, I'm all for it! I don't know how I ever did without "to flame," "to dis" and "to blow off," and there are thousands of now unexceptionable English words such as "clever," "fun," "sham," "banter" and "stingy" that began life as slang. It is especially hypocritical to oppose linguistic innovations reflexively and at the same time to decry the loss of distinctions like "lie" versus "lay" on the pretext of preserving expressive power. Vehicles for expressing thought are being created far more quickly than they are being abandoned.

Indeed, appreciating the linguistic genius of your ordinary Joe is the cure for the deepest fear of the mavens: that English is steadily deteriorating. Every component of every language changes over time, and at any moment a language is enduring many losses. But the richness of a language is always being replenished, because the one aspect of language that does not change is the very thing that creates it: the human mind. •

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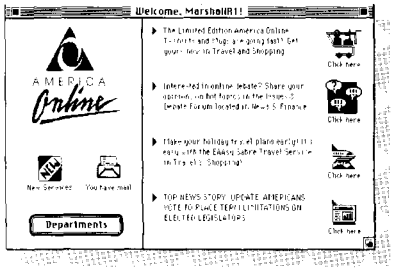

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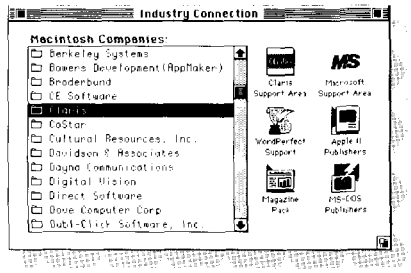

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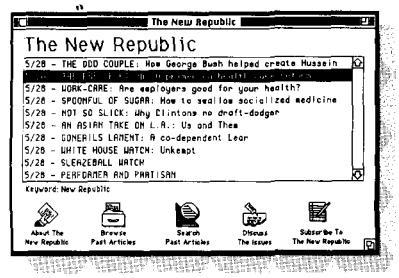
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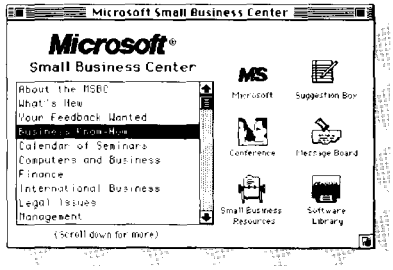

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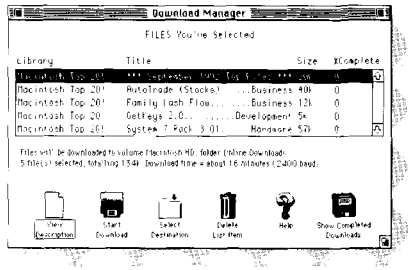

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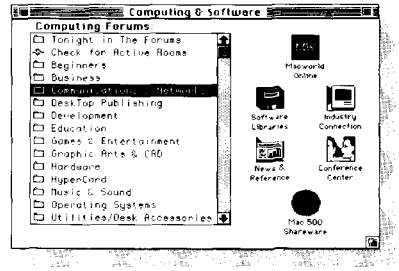

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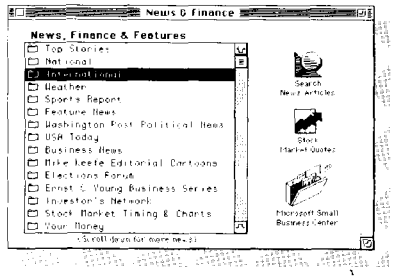

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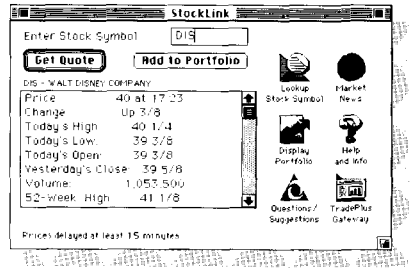

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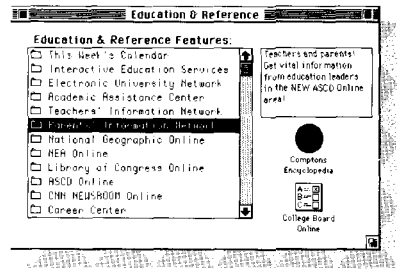

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Fellini, Farewell

Federico Fellini died in Rome on October 31, 1993. Three days later, Alan Cowell wrote in *The New York Times*, with appropriate tremolo:

> In the studio where he made his movies and his name, Fellini lay in cinematographic state today, the lights soft, the music no more than a whisper, the tenderness of the thousands who filed by his burnished coffin mingling with the ghosts of his creations.

His funeral service was held in a Roman basilica, and, reported the *Times*, the huge crowd flowed into the piazza outside. Millions watched the ceremony in a live T.V. broadcast. When the coffin was brought in, "applause filled the basilica."

The coffin was then taken back to his hometown of Rimini. *Variety* reported that, through narrow streets packed with thousands, the coffin was carried from the main piazza to a memorial service, which was held in the theater where Fellini saw his first films and which was featured in *Amarcord* (1973). "Those marching in the procession applauded without interruption as other people threw roses from balconies." An Italian journalist told me that the Rimini theater is to be converted into a Fellini museum, full of memorabilia, where his films will always be available.

To say that all these events are like scenes in a Fellini film is obvious but incomplete. What they really show is how well Fellini understood his countrymen.

Loved though he was universally, the rest of the world little knew how immensely he was adored at home. When he was given a lifetime achievement award at the Oscar ceremonies in March 1993, after having won four Oscars in previous years, the Italian newspaper *L'Unità*, the Communist organ, ran a 160-page special supplement about him. This for a director whose works are virtually free of political comment.

Last year the Italian government made a move of recognition. A complete Fellini retrospective was organized by the *Direzione Generale dello Spettacolo* (with subvention from a coffee company), which was shown in Rome, Milan and Turin. It was playing at the Film Forum in New York when he died, and it has now moved to Tokyo.

Included in the list was his last film, made in 1990 and never released here, **Voices of the Moon**. (The Italian title translates in the singular: *The Voice of the Moon.*) Fellini said: "The initial idea came to me after reading Ermanno Cavazzoni's novel, *Il Poema dei Lunatici*, which is about mad people in Italy." He didn't adapt the novel: it simply stimulated him, particularly since, some thirty years earlier, he had spent five or six weeks with the director of a mental hospital in Tuscany, who lived on the premises.

Voices is not in any sense a clinical study. It's a poetical rhapsody, much more indebted to Leopardi (who is quoted) than to Freud. The central character, played by Roberto Benigni, is a man in a small town, lately a patient in a mental hospital, who wanders gently through that town, often at night by the light of the moon, and who thinks he hears voices from a well. But principal among his adventures are his encounters with the noise and mess of modern life—the intrusions of the media, a tawdry beauty contest—and his madness chiefly manifests itself in his quest for purity and order. (In *8 1/2* the vision in white, played by Claudia Cardinale, tells the protagonist that she has come into his life to bring purity and order.)

He never quite understands the voices from the well. At the end the moon speaks to him, with the voice of a woman in his town whom he has worshiped from afar. She bids him to stop trying to understand those voices, to be grateful that at least he can hear them. In the middle of her remarks, she begs to be excused—a break for a commercial, she says.

Benigni is known here through two films with Jim Jarmusch and the last Pink Panther picture. He is joined in this film, much of the time, by Paolo Villagio, who plays an ex-mayor of the town, gone bonkers with paranoia. Driven loony by the pressures of the world, he now suspects that the most innocent people and objects are conspiring against him.

Villagio is not known here, but both he and Benigni are, said Fellini,

> two enormously popular and much-loved stars [in Italy] who have built up an intense relationship of complicity with their audiences. I broke up that complicity completely, smashed their images, destroyed the characters that had made them famous. They deserve my eternal gratitude for

FILMS WORTH SEEING

In the Name of the Father. *About the Guildford Four, the Irish people wrongly convicted of terrorism in 1974, released fifteen years later. Daniel Day-Lewis and Emma Thompson figure strongly. (Reviewed 1/3/94)* **Philadelphia.** *Tom Hanks as a gay lawyer with* AIDS, *Denzel Washington as* his *lawyer in a discrimination suit. Forceful, candid, unsettling. (1/10&17/94)* **The Remains of the Day.** *Anthony Hopkins, as the butler of a Stately Home, Emma Thompson as the housekeeper, give large dimension to a small, symbolic story. Less subtle than the novel, but what acting! (12/6/93)* **Schindler's List.** *Steven Spielberg's monumental re-creation of an incredible yet true act of benevolence during the Holocaust. A work that will last. (12/13/93 and 1/24/94)* **—SK**

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accepting that sacrifice. Without them ... the film would never have seen the light of day.

This alteration of image can't be seen by non-Italian viewers, even with Benigni, but the experience and dexterity of the two men are patent. Benigni's soft floating and Villagio's dark, overdone ire give a course, a base, to these pathetic meanderings in the moonlight.

Unique though it is in theme, *Voices* is nonetheless typical of Fellini—in its heterodoxy. He said, "I was totally in the dark while making the film.... I spent each evening writing the next day's scenes on a scrap of paper." If that sounds like ex post facto bravado, which it may be, it suggests the opposite of firm structure: it's investigation—of milieu, mood, character. Think of the other films he made in this (ostensibly) freehand manner: *Amarcord*, *The Clowns* (1970), *Roma* (1972), *Intervista* (1988). True, some of his clearly structured films, *La Dolce Vita* (1959) and *8 1/2* (1963), share that freehand style to a degree as Fellini fulfills their designs; but here the style is almost the raison d'être. The odd aspect of these style-centered films is that, in full career perspective, they seem inventions mothered by necessity.

That necessity grows out of the binary nature of Fellini's career. As with many artists, his work falls into periods—in his case, two. From 1950, when he co-directed *Variety Lights* with Alberto Lattuada, through *The Nights of Cabiria* in 1957, his films were in the neo-realist mode pioneered by Rossellini and Visconti and De Sica. We can catch glimpses of the subsequent Fellini in *La Strada* (1954) and *Cabiria*; but Fellini was intent on neo-realism. His masterpiece of the period, *I Vitelloni* (1953), is unswervingly neo-realist.

These earlier films are the ones that have by far the closest relation in Fellini to the Second World War—in style, not in subject. Neo-realism was a stylistic response to the war, and his early films are his response to that response. A biographical fact, as well as an aesthetic atmosphere, may be involved. Fellini was not caught up in the war. Born in 1920, he was of age for military service, but, with some ingenuity, he found medical reasons to avoid the draft—whether because he was anti-fascist or non-fascist, as has been conjectured, or simply out of self-preservation. We can't say or judge. But we can hazard that his first group of films, largely concerned with people struggling to survive, was a kind of indirect acknowledgment of the sufferings brought on by the war; and may have been seen by him as a sort of expiation.

Yet it was only when he left neo-realism and turned to quite different social strata, with *La Dolce Vita*, that we see the emergence of the Fellini whom the world knows best, the baroque, theatrical, gallant stylist. Maturity and self-confidence had much to do with the change, of course, but so did his upward social mobility. Success had come to him; and with success had come that perk so important to serious artists who succeed—the chance to see that success is hollow.

A salient aspect of his second-period films is that, unlike his earlier pictures, many of them have no programmatic narrative or drama. The two outstanding exceptions are *La Dolce Vita* and *8 1/2*; and even with the second of these, Fellini himself has testified to his troubles in finding a program. He said, in an interview in *Le Monde* in 1990, that he had written a letter of resignation to the producer because he was blank, when he was summoned to a launch party for the picture. "They all raised their cups and drank to my health. '*Dottore*, this film is going to be a great one. Cheers!' I almost died of shame." He went back to his office, tore up his letter of resignation, "then filmed the story of a director who can't remember what film he's supposed to be making."

The result was the masterpiece of the second period and, most certainly, one of the best films in world history. But *8 1/2* is the last Fellini film of notable cogency. Most of the rest, scintillating and endearing and invaluable as they often are, are either (seeming) improvisations or adaptations—*Satyricon* (1969) and *Casanova* (1976). These two, though they teem with Fellini images, rank low on the Fellini scale. Some of the others, ad hoc though they may appear, are major achievements—*Amarcord*, *The Clowns*, *Intervista*.

Why did Fellini make these free-form films? Here is a speculation. He had cut loose from the people among whom he grew up, had moved from the imperatives of sheer survival to the luxury of melancholy and despair. After his first two films in this contemplative vein he had great difficulty—like Guido in *8 1/2*—in synthesizing narrative out of his new social and spiritual environment. Yet he was brimming with talents that he had to use. A post-Guido Guido, he more or less gave up on constructing conventional narratives or dramas and turned to the exploration of his talents in themselves, employing them on memory, not on new experience. His new experience was not as fertile for him as was the past. The past is the real site of *Amarcord* and *The Clowns*, of *Intervista* and *And the Ship Sails On* (1983). A yearning for the lost orderliness of the past is the dominant key of *Voices of the Moon*.

Out of these necessities and pressures came the new Fellini form, best described (as others have noted) by a literary term—the personal essay. Samuel Johnson said that doubtless the Lord could have invented a better fruit than the strawberry but doubtless also he never did. We might say, somewhat lower down the scale, that doubtless Fellini could have commissioned scripts of greater cogency but doubtless also he never did. He preferred to make films out of his talents themselves and his remembrance.

In discussions of Fellini, his views on women are recurrently examined. (Two weeks after his death *Le Monde* ran a cartoon set in Heaven. On a cloud in the lower left sits Fellini in a director's chair, megaphone in hand, a motion picture camera next to him. In the air float starry-eyed, big-busted angels in low-cut gowns. In the upper left corner on another cloud, St. Peter is complaining to God: "Since he's been up here, it's been a madhouse.")

It's worth noting that at least some feminist critics are far from antagonistic. A new anthology of recent criticism, *Perspectives on Federico Fellini* (G.K. Hall, 326 pp., $50), is helpful on this point. Co-edited by a prime Fellini expert, Peter Bondanella, with Cristina Degli-Esposti, it contains much of interest, including a section on "Fellini, Feminism and the Image of Women in His Cinema."

Two of the four pieces in this section are on *Juliet of the Spirits* (1965). Teresa de Lauretis, after some thick terminological slogging, seems to find some aesthetic and thematic utility in the film. In a much more enlightening essay, Marguerite Waller dissects several sequences in the film to show how carefully Fellini avoids those Hollywood patterns of composition and editing that treat women as voyeurs' prey. Waller contends that, in the very method of his film, he fights for woman's selfhood, allowing us to see "that Hollywood's highly restricted, patriarchal rhetoric is not the natural extension of the human psyche it is sometimes claimed to be."

Gaetona Marrone's article on *City of Women* (1980) is more descriptive than analytical, yet is certainly not adversarial. But the surprise in the group is by the rampant feminist Germaine Greer. She had known Fellini somewhat, and in 1988 she was asked by a London magazine to interview him. Greer understands as much about Fellini's female characters as anyone, but this interview has no touch of opposition to his male-

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gazing; titled "Fellinissimo," it is a carol of adulation. (He asks her why she likes him, and she says something about his teeth and his hands. "He tries another tack. 'What don't you like about me?' 'The fact that you must die,' I say.")

Greer scrupulously includes every compliment that Fellini paid her on her various charms, and we can see that, more than mere egotism on her part, it is the record of a kind of seduction. She knows that, besides his respect for her intelligence, he is pelting her with petals of attentiveness and courtesy. Add to this his attractiveness as a man and his stature as an artist and add further that, after her return home, he telephoned to thank her for interviewing him, and we can see that he has, so to speak, been making a film with her: directing scenes. And she has collaborated.

I don't imply that a feminist as such is, or ought to be, impervious to male attention, but it's almost as if he had persuaded her to discard her militancy during their time together, to allow him to be his Italian-male self, in the most traditionally voluptuous diction. Finally it's not his triumph, it's hers, because she wrote the piece. But she makes it clear that, by his very being, he persuaded her to write it as it is.

What he did fundamentally with her was to perform. This is by no means to say that he was faking: it was part of the truth of his nature to perform. We all do it to some degree, as current psychologists and philosophers constantly remind us, but not all of us rejoice in it as Fellini did. Thus it's not quite accurate to say that he put himself into some of his films (*The Clowns, Intervista, Roma*): it's more apt to say that he couldn't keep himself out of them. That's why his death gave so many of us an added pang. We were not only losing the artist, we were losing the man.

I spent one day with him, August 11, 1964, on the Roman location where he was shooting a scene of *Juliet of the Spirits*. I arrived early in the morning to find him in the middle of a large room, while members of the crew bustled around him. He was sitting on a box with a portable typewriter on another box and was busily rewriting the scenes they were to shoot that day.

The morning whirled by, as a short scene with Giulietta Masina and Valentina Cortese was shot and re-shot. (It was cut from the finished film.) Then a lot of us, including the two actresses, went to lunch with him—at the Rizzoli studios, because he liked the *polpettine* (meatballs) there. He and I talked a great deal during lunch (his English was adequate, my Italian inadequate), mostly about how difficult it was, in these days of deeper psychological understanding, to create credible villains in drama and film. After lunch we all snoozed in various places until the sun moved to the place where Fellini needed it.

But, in all that sparkling Fellini-centered day, something contradictory stood out. He insisted that I meet some of his collaborators. He introduced me to his editor, the other Mastroianni, Ruggero, who disliked any mention of his resemblance to his actor-brother. He told me how closely he worked with Fellini during the shooting of a film, even during its planning. Fellini brought along to lunch his masterly cinematographer, Gianni di Venanzo, but di Venanzo was shy, despite Fellini's asking "Giannino" to speak up.

At the end of the long, marvelous day, as Fellini and I shook hands, he asked, "Why you don't go to see the genius who helps me make my films whatever it is they are?" I asked who that was. "Piero Gherardi." Gherardi, the set and costume designer for *Juliet*, had also done the same flamboyant work for *The Nights of Cabiria, La Dolce Vita* and *8 1/2*. (I did try to see him, but he was out of Rome, and by the time I got back a few years later, he had died.) I said I thought he had meant the composer Nino Rota. Fellini threw up his hands and looked heavenward in gratitude.

All this emphasized what is true of every good director but has never been more true of any than of him. One of the signs of a director's talent is his ability to assemble colleagues who are both artists in their own right and seeming extensions of his temperament. It's impossible to think of several Fellini films without remembering Rota's music: it's as if Rota were Fellini in musical form. The clothes and hats and sets that Gherardi designed, the gradations of black and white that di Venanzo found, make us think, "Ah, Fellini!" Dante Ferretti's designs, crowding one after another, are the chief train of interest in *City of Women*. Tonino Delli Colli's lighting holds *Voices of the Moon* midway between reality and dream.

These men worked on other directors' films, often beautifully, but never better than they did with Fellini. Their contributions to his work, far from lessening our estimate of his genius, only amplify it. He knew how to extend, so to speak, his faculties.

One of the reasons that this article is long is that I dread coming to the end of it. I don't want to, can't, won't "sum up" Fellini. I'll say just one thing. During his lifetime, many fine filmmakers blessed us with their art, but he was the only one who made us feel that each of his films, whatever its merits, was a present from a friend. •

The Dialectics of Dixie

BY GORDON S. WOOD

John C. Calhoun: A Biography
by Irving H. Bartlett
(W. W. Norton, 416 pp., $25)

Union and Liberty:
The Political Philosophy of John C. Calhoun
edited by Ross M. Lence
(Liberty Fund, 626 pp., $25, $9.50 paper)

Should anyone today pay attention to John C. Calhoun? It scarcely seems possible that this nineteenth-century racist and slaveholder could have anything meaningful to say to us as we approach the end of the twentieth century. As the antebellum spokesman for states' rights, white supremacy and the Old South, Calhoun seems to represent, in the historical memory of Americans, all that has been destroyed by the Civil War of the nineteenth century and the civil rights movement of the twentieth century. Calhoun seems totally out of touch with the principal concerns and beliefs of the present. He not only denied the basic principles of the Declaration of Independence—that all men were created free and equal—but he defended African American slavery as a positive good. What message could such a figure

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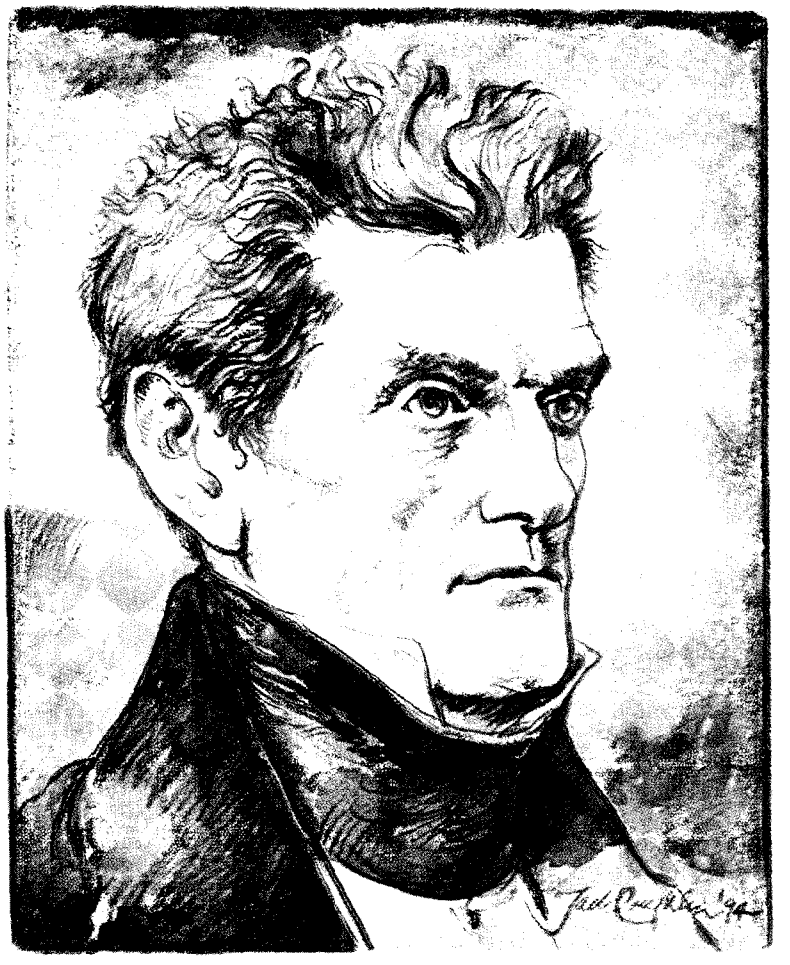
out of the different and distant past have for us today?

Strange as it may seem, this antebellum Southern political leader and thinker does have something to say after all to our late modern world. Indeed, he may have become relevant, even politically correct, precisely because we live in an increasingly multicultural and pluralist society. In his writings Calhoun was no doubt defending slavery and Southern slaveholders from Northern pressures. But he was also defending minority rights; and if there is anything today we care passionately about, it is minority rights. Thus the appearance of a new biography of Calhoun, and the publication of a new edition of some of Calhoun's most important writings and speeches, is timely. They offer an excellent opportunity for a new look at this nineteenth-century statesman and political theorist, archaic and irrelevant as he may appear.

Calhoun was born in 1782 into a Scotch-Irish family that, like so many others in the mid-eighteenth century, had migrated down the Appalachian Mountain valley into the backcountry of South Carolina. His father became a prominent slaveholder in a region where slaves were not yet common. Life was still raw and rough on the frontier, and violence was very much part of people's memories: his father's mother had been killed by Indians in 1760, and his mother's brother, John Caldwell, after whom he was named, had been murdered by Tories during the Revolution. His father, who had survived the Indian massacre of 1760, had a stubborn independence and, as Calhoun recalled, "a certain degree of contempt for the forms of civilized life." Like many in the backcountry, he had a passion for liberty and a deep dislike of far-removed government; he opposed ratification of the federal Constitution on the grounds that "we ought never to give others the power to tax us."

Although his father died in 1795 when John was only 13, the strong-minded man obviously had a powerful influence on the young boy. As Irving Bartlett says in his straightforward and fair-minded biography, which is probably the best single-volume life of the South Carolina statesman, Calhoun learned from his father "the importance of duty and the necessity to regard life as a struggle against evil." The responsibilities that came from the early death of his father helped develop in Calhoun what Harriet Martineau called his "cast-iron" character: his seriousness, industry and single-mindedness.

With his older brothers off learning to be merchants, young Calhoun had to take on much of the burden of running the family's 1,200-acre plantation. Somehow he picked up an elementary education over the next four years, which only whetted his appetite for more. When he was 18, his brothers agreed to run the family plantation while he prepared for a professional career. He wanted the best education he could get, and he expected that it would take seven years. He graduated from Yale in 1804 and then went on to study law at Tappan Reeves's famous school in Lichfield, Connecticut. But he never liked practicing law and had his sights on a political career from the beginning.



DRAWING BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

After a short stint in the South Carolina legislature, he entered the U.S. House of Representatives in 1811 at the age of 29. Keenly self-conscious that the torch was being passed to a new generation of leaders, he immediately became one of the prominent "war hawks" who led the country into war against Great Britain. At this point no one was more nationalist than Calhoun. He decried all sectional feeling and called for strenuous efforts "to counteract every tendency to disunion." He favored higher tariffs, a new national bank, more roads, more canals, more manufactures—anything and everything that would bind the American people more closely together. Even the Missouri crisis of 1820 did not disturb him the way it did other Southerners such as Jefferson. Calhoun stood for moderation; he told friends that the crisis was being exaggerated, and that all sections needed to look to leaders who supported "the general interest." Becoming secretary of war under President Monroe only deepened his nationalism and his ambition to be a national leader. Already he had his eye on the presidency.

In the 1820s, however, charges from South Carolinian politicians that Calhoun supported a protectionist tariff, which was blamed for raising the cost of the state's imports and lowering the prices of its cotton exports, gradually forced Calhoun to change his nationalist tune for a more sectional one. To combat the famous Tariff of Abominations of 1828, Calhoun began thinking through the principles on which the United States government was based. In the *South Carolina Exposition and Protest* of 1828, he set forth the dangers that the unchecked majority power of the North posed for the Southern minority in the U.S. government, and offered as protection the ultimate right of each state to decide contested points of authority between the general government and itself.

For all its radicalism, however, the *Exposition* could not keep up with anti-federal opinion in South Carolina, and

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Calhoun found himself swept along into the Nullification Crisis of 1831-32, in which a specially elected convention of his state formally nullified the tariffs of 1824 and 1828. Although the crisis was eased by compromise, Calhoun, who was elected senator from South Carolina in 1832, emerged very much identified as the mastermind of nullification and the most prominent leader of the South. Still, he had not abandoned his national presidential ambitions and continued to believe that his states' rights opposition to the consolidating tyranny of the federal government had more than sectional appeal.

But the democratic developments represented by the presidency of Andrew Jackson were transforming the country and making it more and more difficult for Calhoun to reconcile his principles with his ambitions. Calhoun had no intention of becoming another Martin Van Buren, another one of the new breed of spoilsmen and practical party politicians that American democracy was creating. He looked to classical republicanism and men like George Washington for models of proper political leadership—someone above party and the lures of popularity, someone independent, incorruptible and disinterested. Politics for him was not "a scramble among eminent men"; it was "a science by which the lasting interest of the country may be advanced." Despite his widely recognized talents and his ability to politick privately on his own behalf, which was proven by his election to the vice presidency in 1824 and 1828, he remained, as Bartlett says, "naïve ... in the face of a new democratic politics."

He repeatedly turned down invitations to address public meetings and could scarcely imagine himself pressing the flesh of the masses. To the consternation of many of his supporters, Calhoun continually refused to campaign for the presidency, even in 1844, when his prospects for a presidential nomination were greatest. Everyone in 1844 urged him to get out and let the country see him, but he refused to budge from his plantation at Fort Hill. The office of president, he said, was "too elevated ... to be the object of personal solicitation." Although some may think him too "fastidious," he felt he had to avoid anything that smacked of "a mere electioneering tour." He clung stubbornly to the old-fashioned political style of the founding fathers and, as Bartlett writes, was therefore unable "to speak to the democratic spirit of the new age."

He badly wanted to become president, but he seemed to enjoy himself most when he was running against the flow of public opinion. Popular opposition to his efforts made him feel that he must be doing his duty. And he had no doubts about his capacity to carry out that duty. "Whether it be too great confidence in my own opinion I cannot say," he once wrote. "But what I think I see, I see with so much apparent clearness as not to leave me a choice to pursue any other course, which has always given me the impression that I acted with the force of destiny." He was so sure of himself, so boastful of his achievements, that President John Tyler was once provoked into calling him "the great I am."

His integrity and his talents seemed to set him above the fray. He could not be elected president, he told his brother-in-law in 1844, because "I am too honest and patriotic to be the choice of anything like a majority." He consistently overrated his political power and thought his bitter confrontations with Jackson, the popular hero of the age, and his abandonment of the Democratic Party, would earn him the respect of the country. With wheeling and dealing all about him, he took great pride in standing alone in his own glory. He was a vice president who openly quarreled with two successive presidents, a nationalist who turned into the supreme spokesman for nullification, a free-lance senator who played one party off against the other. For many Americans, writes Bartlett, who has also written an excellent biography of Calhoun's great northern opponent Daniel Webster, the South Carolinian appeared to be "a kind of maverick locomotive force in American public life, who frequently failed to reach his destination but nevertheless seemed unstoppable."

Yet nothing damaged Calhoun's credentials as a national leader more than his impassioned defense of slavery. Before 1830 Calhoun paid little attention to the issue of black slavery; indeed, he scarcely mentioned it in his private and public papers. He took the existence of slavery in the South so much for granted as a just and necessary institution that he had no need to think much about it. He assumed that blacks were naturally inferior to whites and could exist peacefully and prosperously with whites only as slaves. Only the growing anti-slave sentiment in the North during the 1830s compelled Calhoun to make explicit his justification of slavery; and when he did so, it was with fierce and intense passion.

Calhoun argued that slavery in the South should never be open to political debate, because the very existence of the southern states and their way of life depended on it. The diversity of races in the South ordained the system of slavery, which was in fact superior to the system of labor and capital that existed in the North. Since "there never has yet existed a wealthy and civilized society in which one portion of the community did not, in point of fact, live on the labor of the other," better the paternalism and the stability of Southern slavery than the workshops of European and northern capitalism.

But slavery was not just a matter of necessity in Calhoun's thinking; it was a benefit to both races. Enslaved blacks in the South, he said, were more comfortable, more respectable and more advanced than blacks in central Africa. Slavery was the source of prosperity in the South and a means of civilizing the African American; it was in fact the most solid and durable foundation for free republican government. It was not an evil therefore, but "a positive good." Intensifying his conviction that slavery was a benevolent but vulnerable institution for the South was his growing realization that the southern states were a permanent minority in the country. Once that minority status became clear to him, he argued that the southern states had every right to demand that the Senate refuse to accept abolitionist petitions and every right to forbid abolitionist literature from entering their borders.

Hard as it may be for us to accept, Calhoun was utterly sincere in his belief in the beneficence of slavery. Every position that he took on every issue had to rest on the highest moral ground, and slavery was no exception. It was imperative with him that slavery be morally right. Indeed, his sense of resolve and righteousness on slavery matched that of the abolitionists; which is why abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison could admire Calhoun for his strong-mindedness, for being "a man who means what he says and who never blusters."

Certainly there was nothing frivolous about Calhoun. He did not drink or tell jokes or engage in small talk. When in Washington without his family, he usually dined alone at a temperance boardinghouse. He had followers and supporters, but not many close friends. Dixon Lewis, the states' rights congressman from Alabama, wrote in 1840 to a friend of Calhoun that his association with the South Carolinian was proving to be very trying:

> He is too intelligent, too industrious, too intent on the struggle of politics to suit me except as an occasional companion. There is no *relaxation* with him. On the contrary,

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when I seek relaxation with him, he screws me only higher in some sort of excitement.

Sometimes his tenacity and singleness of purpose made him seem slightly ridiculous. Henry Clay, with whom he often dueled in the Senate, has left us an unforgettable sketch: "tall, careworn, with furrowed brow, haggard and intensely gazing, looking as if he were dissecting the last abstraction which sprung from metaphysician's brain and muttering to himself, in half-uttered tones, 'This is indeed a real crisis.'"

But Calhoun's reputation rests on more than these sorts of anecdotes and on his statesmanship as senatorial spokesman for the South and his service as a Cabinet secretary in several administrations. He was one of those rare American politicians who tried to write something more than legislative speeches and campaign pamphlets. In fact, Bartlett contends that Calhoun's "ultimate ambition, was not to become president but to be known as the statesman who finally placed political science on the same solid foundation as physical science." Hence we can only welcome the new edition of Calhoun's writings and principal addresses edited by Ross M. Lence, who teaches political science at the University of Houston. Like other Liberty Fund editions, this volume is sparsely edited with only a brief foreword and no annotations, but it is superbly bound and inexpensively priced.

The volume contains a dozen of Calhoun's speeches and public statements, together with the full texts of his *Disquisition on Government*, which he completed a year before his death in 1850, and his *Discourse on the Constitution and Government of the United States*, which he was writing when he died. Although both these works were the products of Calhoun's long reflection on his experience in American politics, they were very different from one another. The *Discourse* is a concrete and historical discussion of the origins and the character of the United States government. The *Disquisition* is abstract, unhistorical and, in a word, scientific. Its purpose was not to describe the ins and outs of American political institutions, but to set forth a science of politics that would be applicable to all people in all times and all places, including presumably our time and our place in the late twentieth century.

Calhoun began his *Disquisition* with certain premises. Men were naturally sociable but also intensely self-interested—so self-interested that government was necessary to keep them from destroying society. And since the self-interested governors were no better than the governed, something was needed to prevent the abuse of governmental power. The restraints of superstition, ceremonies, education and religion had all been tried and found wanting. Only some self-regulating arrangement, which Calhoun variously refers to as "organism" or "constitution," could keep rulers from aggrandizing themselves.

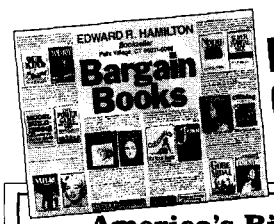
In the constitution, the first and principal means of preventing governmental oppression was establishing the right of suffrage for the ruled in order to hold the rulers responsible for their conduct through elections at proper intervals. But, said Calhoun, periodic elections could never be enough to prevent an abuse of power by government. Elections might be a sufficient safeguard if the whole community had the same interests, so that the actions of the government affected everyone equally. But communities, even the smallest, were not made up of a single homogeneous interest. Consequently, in all societies, struggles will necessarily take place among the diverse and varied interests to obtain a majority in order to control the government. Once in power, the controlling majority interest or combination of interests will inevitably seek to use the powers of government to benefit itself at the expense of the minority interest or interests. This was, in effect, the same problem that James Madison had addressed in the famous tenth paper of *The Federalist*, the problem of majoritarian tyranny in a democratic society.

Madison assumed, unlike Calhoun, that the source of the problem lay in the states and that the new elevated federal government would be the solution. Madison believed that in the enlarged society of the United States the diverse interests would rarely be able to combine to create tyrannical majorities in the new federal government in the way they had created them in the separate state legislatures. In an expanded society, wrote Madison, "the people are broken into so many interests and parties that a common sentiment is less likely to be felt, and requisite concert less likely to be formed, by a majority of the whole."

In other words, the more interests there were in the society, the less likely they would be able to combine and capture control of the government. While the various interests were busy fighting among themselves in the society, Madison believed that those educated gentlemen "who possess the most attractive merit and the most diffusive and established characters" would be able to dominate the elevated federal government to a degree they had not dominated the local and state governments and to promote the common good of the whole in a virtuous manner.

The national government would thus become, according to Madison, a "disinterested and dispassionate umpire in disputes between different passions and interests in the State." Madison understood that it had worked that way in American religion: the multiplicity of religious sects in America prevented any one of them from dominating the state and permitted the enlightened reason of liberal gentlemen like Jefferson and himself to shape public policy and church-state relations and protect the rights of minorities. "In a free government," Madison wrote in *The Federalist*, No. 51, "the security for civil rights must be the same as that for religious rights. It consists in the one case in the multiplicity of interests, and in the other in the multiplicity of sects."

Calhoun had none of Madison's confidence that the national government might be freer from the pressure of interests than the state and local governments. He was convinced that no government, no matter how elevated, could stand above the competing interests of society and legislate in a disinterested



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manner. Indeed, he no longer believed there was a common good that transcended the various parts of the society. In a democratic society, particular interests were all there were, and they (or a majority faction of them) would inevitably gain control of government. Government might be elevated, legislatures might be divided and powers might be separated and set against one another; but none of these measures could keep a majority of interests from combining and oppressing minorities.

Calhoun's solution to the problem of majoritarian tyranny, therefore, had to be very different from Madison's solution. For Calhoun, the more homogeneous and the fewer interests in the society, and the more decentralized the government and the closer it was to the people, the better. If elevated national governments were necessary to govern large societies of diverse interests, however, they had to have constitutions that did not rely on the interests neutralizing themselves so that some disinterested gentry could promote the public good.

In Calhoun's view, two elements were essential for a proper constitution. The right of suffrage was basic, but it was not enough: it created a numerical majority, but it did nothing to prevent that numerical majority from using the power of government to aggrandize itself at the expense of the minority. Something else was needed to make a real constitution, and that something was what Calhoun called the "concurrent majority," by which he meant a mode or device in the constitution that required the concurrent consent of all the interests in the society to the making and executing of governmental laws. Only such a device, he said, could prevent or inhibit conflict among the interests in the society, and stop a numerical majority from using government to oppress minorities. If each interest realized that nothing could be accomplished in government until all other interests consented, then, Calhoun argued, each interest would be encouraged to compromise with others and unite to promote the prosperity of the whole community. Otherwise the government would be deadlocked and nothing would get done.

If all men are self-interested and desirous of protecting and promoting their interests, as Calhoun assumed, then it was to their advantage to conciliate one another and maximize each of their interests. If they refuse to conciliate one another, all would lose. Thus the impulse to compromise would be practically irresistible. Compromise, Calhoun concluded, is the natural solution for these clashing interests; it is the conservative principle of all constitutional governments. Public policy, or whatever might be called the common interest, would emerge naturally from the give-and-take and the compromises of the different competing interests. The interest of the whole would be served simply by serving the interests of the parts.

Calhoun offers us an extraordinary insight into the workings of American democratic politics, and that insight makes his *Disquisition* as important to the history of American political thought as Madison's *Federalist* No. 10. Indeed, Calhoun's treatise has a much more realistic and relevant portrayal of interest group politics than Madison's essay. Like Madison, he relied on his system to produce enlightened and patriotic statesmen—the impulse to compromise would give rise to the right sort of social-minded representatives who would be very different from unscrupulous party hacks and spoilsmen—but still he believed that the interests had to be an integral part of the processes of government.

Although Calhoun's *Disquisition* alluded to no contemporary issues, made no mention of tariffs, abolitionism, slavery or any individual living or dead, his seventy-three-page treatise (in the Liberty Fund edition) was clearly based on his forty-year experience in politics and government, and particularly on his perception of the minority position of the South in the United States. He was obviously thinking of the conflicting interests of the agrarian South and the manufacturing North, of slavery and free labor. He certainly could have had no real appreciation of the various clashing ethnic and cultural interests that today are tearing up states all over the world; and, as Bartlett correctly points out, he surely would have had trouble with our modern idea of pluralism. Still, he wrote at such a high level of abstraction and generalization that his analysis of how minorities can be protected in a democratic political system still seems to have something to say to us today, especially since "inclusion" and "diversity" have become our catchwords.

Calhoun was concerned with the timeless problem of making minorities—ethnic, religious or geographic—feel assured that they are not going to be oppressed by numerical majorities. Only with such security would the parts be willing to remain within the whole. To accomplish this, political power had to be greatly diffused, and the structure of government made exceedingly complicated. Only such a complex and intricate system of government could prevent majorities from acting decisively and allow minorities a virtual negative over decisions directly affecting them.

No doubt Calhoun's scheme of a concurrent majority in which each interest (for him, each state) has a veto over the proceedings of government is, technically speaking, impractical and unworkable in the precise way that he laid it out. But, as Peter Drucker argued in an essay nearly a half century ago, the principles underlying Calhoun's system are precisely those of the American government in the twentieth century. We do not have to adopt alternative voting schemes, such as those of Lani Guinier, to protect minority rights; our political system already takes care of minority rights remarkably well. Indeed, our present system goes beyond Calhoun's wildest dreams in not just protecting minority rights but promoting them. A large country with many diverse interests such as the United States can conduct its politics in no other way than through compromise and conciliation of those diverse interests, including those of race and ethnicity and the gun lobby. In a democratic, pluralistic society like our own, nothing can get done until all the major interests have a say, and anything that is done has to be generally unobjectionable to these major interests.

Interest pluralism, extraconstitutional and unofficial as it may be, wrote Drucker, is the method through which the organs of American government function, through which leaders are selected, policies are developed and people and groups are organized for the managing of political power. In short, "it is the explanation for the most distinctive features of the American political system." Not only is the principle of sectional and interest compromise clearly revealed in the congressional committee system, but all members of Congress are expected to operate according to the "rule of the concurrent majority"—looking after both their local constituencies and the national interest at the same time. In the half-century since Drucker wrote his essay, our political system's concern for minority interests has only intensified, indeed, to the point where some might say that it is the majority's rights that are being neglected.

Of course, as Drucker himself pointed out, Calhoun's system of protecting minorities has serious weaknesses. Interest pluralism, in which all groups have to be satisfied before anything is done, can lead to government paralysis, in which nothing gets done. The gridlocks that have characterized the American political system in recent years are due not merely to different parties controlling

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the presidency and the Congress; they are due also to the workings of the system of concurrent majorities.

Moreover, Calhoun's system of interest pluralism cannot work very well in foreign affairs. Foreign policy cannot be based merely on adding up interests—regional, economic, ethnic or racial—or by compromising among them; it must transcend those interests. If foreign policy is not based on general principles, wrote Drucker in 1948, it "will become a series of improvisations without rhyme or reason." The end of the cold war, and the collapse of a foreign policy based on the general principle of containing communism, raises precisely the danger of an erratic, interest-driven foreign policy.

But the most important weakness of Calhoun's concurrent majority is its inability to resolve conflicts of moral principle. People involved in the system ultimately have to be willing to compromise for the sake of unity. This was the fatal flaw in Calhoun's hopes for conciliation between North and South in the antebellum period: in the end, both sides were unwilling to compromise on the issue of slavery and its extension, and the war came. Conciliation works only if the parts care enough about the whole to preserve it. And that seems to be the lesson of the minority conflicts of our own time, too.

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Village Idiots

BY ROBERT BRUSTEIN

Greenwich Village 1963: Avant-Garde Performance and the Effervescent Body by Sally Banes

(Duke University Press, 352 pp., $49.95, $17.95 paper)

The Blurring of Art and Life by Allan Kaprow

(University of California Press, 284 pp., $25)

In *Greenwich Village 1963*, Sally Banes, former performance art critic for *The Village Voice*, now associate professor of dance and theater history and chair of the dance department at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, offers to establish 1963 as a climacteric year for American avant-garde art. In a term that she borrows from Foucault, Banes calls the Village in the '60s a heterotopia—festive, playful, performative, leftist, exotic and, above all, erotic. As you may deduce from the book's subtitle, "Avant-Garde Performance and the Effervescent Body," she is particularly exercised by the corporeal, if not aerated, nature of her subject. My dictionary defines *effervescent* as "gently bubbling and hissing from the giving off of gas." I can't say whether this better describes her thesis or her style.

It is Banes's conviction that the seeds of the sexual revolution, the counterculture, the peace movement, gay pride, postmodernism, "community, democracy, of work and play, of the body, of women's roles" and so on were sown in 1963, and that it all happened on or near Macdougal Street, under the approving gaze of *Village Voice* writers (Jill Johnston and Jonas Mekas are her most frequently cited authorities).

Provincial as this notion may sound, there is undoubtedly a connection between experimental theater, music, dance, art and film in the '60s and certain developments in today's culture, though not everyone would find this a cause for rejoicing. It has often been argued that this movement, which she insists on calling "anti-establishment," now occupies a central place inside the art world and the academy. Indeed, many believe that we are living in a global Greenwich Village, with the avant-garde representing the new American mainstream. Banes, for example, who also considers herself "anti-establishment," not only occupies the chair of an academic department, but sits on cushions (i.e., fellowships) from Guggenheim, Mellon, the ACLS and Wesleyan.

This book, in short, is tailor-made to stoke the wrath of Hilton Kramer and all the neocons who blame the '60s for everything that they find deplorable in contemporary American culture, from Mapplethorpe's X Portfolio and Serrano's *Piss Christ* to Annie Sprinkle's labia displays and Karen Finley's chocolate rubs. And it must be conceded that, as described in this book, much of the artistic activity of the era looks pretty silly, a subject better treated by satirists than publicists. Unfortunately Banes permits neither humor nor levity to permeate her paeans and dithyrambs; omitted from her discussion are the great '60s comics (Lenny Bruce, Nichols and May, Dick Gregory, Woody Allen, the Establishment and Second City companies), arguably among the most creative personalities of the time. While the period produced a number of capable and original artists, she never proves the case that they occupy an indisputable place in American cultural history. Most have value for her mainly as members of a movement, figures in a generation, faces in a decade or (to embellish an image from Harold Rosenberg's "herd of independent minds") cattle in a hip corral.

Banes tries to disarm such criticism with the familiar defense that the Village movement was a challenge to the "elite" tradition of modernism and its annoying aesthetic standards. The avant-garde of the '60s rejected the divisions "that establishment culture had created—between mind and body, artist and audience, high art and low art, art and science, art and life." Indifferent to training, technique and tradition, the movement was intensely hostile to all pre-existing forms of professionalism, including critical judgments of value.

This was further suggested in the way that the Greenwich Village avant-garde labored to invalidate the credentials of skilled craftsmen, not to mention gifted artists. (It was particularly scornful of the abstract expressionists.) Everyone was capable of creating works of art. Everyone could be world-famous for fifteen minutes. Banes takes as her exemplary model a movement that has gone in and out of the public's brief attention span over the years (it resurfaced recently at the Whitney) known as Fluxus and founded by a graphic artist named George Maciunas. Paying early tribute to the "effervescent body," Maciunas based his aesthetic on flux, which he defined as "a fluid discharge from the bowels or other part."

In this, Maciunas resembled no one so much as Stanley Kubrick's General Jack

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D. Ripper, another hoarder of precious bodily essences. Maciunas, however, had a most un-Ripperlike affection for Stalin. He followed a Soviet model in devoting himself to mass production in the arts, railing against the "bourgeois sickness" of "Europanism [sic]," exalting amateurism and initiating a leveling process related to a utopian model of cooperative work and life: "Fluxus," he wrote, "invites ... every human to come forward to work or to play"—also, presumably, to discharge bodily fluids freely from the bowels or other parts. (Fluxus artists were divided over whether piss, shit or ripe cheese was the preferred medium.)

Intoxicated as she is with Fluxus, Banes is equally enamored of any event that treats the body as an excretory organ. If Fluxus featured pissing contests, Jim Dine's bathroom fixtures "deliberately soiled the rhetoric of the beautiful and sublime" by establishing the resemblance between "the plumbing—with its holes, bulges and tubes—and the orifices and protuberances of the human body itself." But the "effervescent body" for Banes is not only an excretory organism, it is also a "gustatory body." Eating can be both a reproductive and erotic activity. Banes cites Ben Patterson's instructions for his "Licking Piece":

> cover shapely female with whipped cream
> lick...
> topping of chopped nuts and cherries is
> optional

Banes restrains herself from calling Patterson's "shapely female" reference "sexist" (what disturbs me more is the absence of hot fudge). But the link between eating and other appetites is clear: "Feeding serves as a locus for the body festively and transgressively to be turned inside out and upside down."

Turning the body inside out and upside down brings us back to the prime function of the effervescent body, its sexual nature. But whereas, in bourgeois society, sex is usually a private matter, the '60s avant-garde offered to make it "brashly public, often even a communal affair." Indeed, it usually took place in front of an 8mm camera. Although censorship had loosened up considerably in this period, "The New Sexual Freedom Riders," as Mekas called his cohorts, were continually testing the boundaries of the obscene, many years before the National Endowment for the Arts decided to retaliate with content restrictions.

For Banes, the significance of these works, especially those by women and gay men, is that they transgressed "the culture-bound question of gender divisions." Gay and female artists and choreographers were learning "to refuse gender coding" by treating the sexes identically. This could take the form of transvestitism, as in Lanford Wilson's *The Madness of Lady Bright*, or reversing traditional roles, as in Barbara Rubin's *Christmas on Earth*, which featured a woman surrounded by a harem of men. Instead of having sex, in other words, people were now having gender together.

Banes also admires less risible manifestations from this period—the Judson Dance Company, the Judson Poets Theater, the Living Theater, the Open Theater, the Bread and Puppet Theater, La Mama, Caffè Cino and the like, not to mention Andy Warhol's Factory, Jonas Mekas's Underground Film movement, Allan Kaprow's Happenings and the advanced jazz of Miles Davis and Dizzy Gillespie. The movement provided some lively and colorful events, and developed performers of considerable power, particularly in choreography (Lucinda Child, Meredith Monk, Trish Brown, David Gordon). In Sam Shepard (whom she doesn't discuss, preferring early Lanford Wilson), it had a major playwright. And in Howard Moody, the "Christian atheist" of Judson Church who removed the pulpit and the cross from the chapel and turned it over to artists, the movement also found a warmhearted patron. But there is something almost quaint about the majority of the works of this time, and, in her nondiscriminating way, Banes clearly feels more confident ruminating about their political, social and sexual significance than analyzing them as works of art.

What chiefly earns her admiration are projects related to "the reinvention of community," beginning with the tightly knit artistic fraternity of the Village. The Village community implies a collective, but, true to its rejection of walls, boundaries and limits, it repudiates such lesser units as family or class (along with what Jonas Mekas called the community of "lawmakers, police and philistines"). Banes can see the irony in a theory of community that excludes indigenous Villagers like the local ethnic population, and there is no question that Bohemia has always had its own forms of condescension. (When I was a young Village actor in the late '40s, it was customary to greet sightseeing tourists with loud razzing.)

Still, Banes's book is both a historical record and a subjective celebration of the growing democratization of the arts in America—a development, first noticed (with alarm) by Tocqueville in the early nineteenth century, which has now reached a crazy culmination. The avant-garde disposition toward democratic art led it then, as now, to canonize mass culture. Banes rejects the intellectual position, espoused by Clement Greenberg and Dwight MacDonald among others, that links mass culture with the brutalization of society and the debasement of taste, preferring the liberal sociological argument that popular expressions are an extension of egalitarianism, therefore peculiarly American.

Andy Warhol, in particular, is praised for creating saleable icons out of mass culture images, while other pop artists are admired for applying and exploiting such essentially commercial techniques as silk-screening and cartooning. It is still not altogether certain whether Warhol's fascination with consumer kitsch was inspired by sincerity or cynicism, but Banes's assertion that pop art was an act of "resistance and dissent, a historically conscious and deliberate slap in the face to the custodians of high culture" must be analyzed against the extraordinary commercial success of this phenomenon, perhaps the first time in history that "resistance and dissent" created instant millionaires, and insults were rewarded with lucrative gallery contracts.

Nevertheless, Banes believes that a radical egalitarianism was the motivating impulse of virtually the entire avant-garde in this period, stimulating not only a desire for greater dissemination and accessibility, but a leveling fever that invited audience participation and authorized the ordinary as a crucial element of artistic content. Warhol's Brillo boxes and mass-produced Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley portraits, Joseph Cornell's found objects, the Happenings in which people ironed their clothes, shampooed their hair and shaved their legs (or kissed, gave blow jobs and slept for hours on end, as in Warhol's films) were signals that anything was material for art, and anyone could produce it. "There is something very humble and happy," mused Jonas Mekas in praising Warhol's *Eat*, "about a man (or a movie) who is content with eating an apple." Or, as he mused about Warhol's *Empire*, "If all people could sit and watch the Empire State Building for eight hours and meditate upon it, there would be no more wars, no hate, no terror—there would be happiness regained on earth."

Some people remained impervious to these hortatory utopian fantasies; at the first screening of one of Warhol's epic marathons, the audience started hemorrhaging out after the first quarter of an

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hour. (No doubt they were rushing to embrace another fifteen-minute celebrity.) But the belief that an egalitarian elect had somehow stumbled upon the secret of peace on earth, either through art, mind-altering drugs, collectivism or advanced states of perception, was in the air long before Woodstock. At the root of this belief was a form of romantic anarcho-pacifism nowhere better exemplified than in the work of the Living Theater under Judith Malina and Julian Beck.

For the Becks, whose political commitment was previously rather subdued, 1963 was a transitional year. Their early productions were determined more by theater aesthetics than by radical politics, devoted less to communal events than to individual playwrights. The repertory featured plays by Paul Goodman, William Carlos Williams, Luigi Pirandello and Jack Gelber. (Gelber's *The Connection* first brought the Living Theater to national attention in 1959.) Actually, it wasn't until 1963 that the theater fully embraced political activism. The event was Kenneth H. Brown's *The Brig*, a harrowing account of life in a Marine Corps stockade, rehearsed by Judith Malina in an extremely repressive manner. Malina believed that by throwing light on violence and confronting the "Structure," she could "penetrate its locks and open the doors of the jails." For Beck also, the ultimate purpose of the play was to "free all prisoners."

The Becks joined the ranks of those prisoners after the IRS closed down the Living Theater for failing to pay taxes, and they were subsequently arrested and briefly jailed after staging an unauthorized performance of *The Brig*. Once having established themselves as martyrs, the Becks allowed their missionary zeal to outstrip their artistic purpose. Following some years in European exile, where they joined student revolts and helped occupy a theater that hosted them, the Becks returned to this country in 1968 totally transformed in appearance and purpose. Their early Pirandellian experiments, designed to break down barriers between stage and auditorium, had by now developed into full-scale engagements between actors and audiences. At the first American performance of *Paradise Now* in New Haven, they led the spectators into the streets with the ostensible purpose of starting an anarchist revolution.

As Banes concedes, the Becks never actually described what life would be like when all prisoners were freed and all institutions destroyed. They simply believed that organized society obstructed the kindly currents of the human heart. "Natural man is ... a good, beautiful, wholesome brute," Malina affirmed. "We want to say [men] can live together without [wars, prisons and police]." These Rousseauistic notions are touching. But during "The Rite of Universal Intercourse," the climactic scene in *Paradise Now*, when spectators joined the actors to express peace and harmony in a massive love-in, some good, beautiful, wholesome brute raped Judith Malina on the stage of the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Her reported response was: "I wouldn't have minded, if only he'd done it with love."

It is easy enough to mock the naïve, self-righteous rhetoric of the '60s when so many people, inspired by the freedom marches and the peace movement, enraged by the senseless Vietnam War, had come to believe they were a new breed of prelapsarian humanity. Not long after, however, certain factions of the New Left, notably the SDS and the Weathermen, would demonstrate that the "Structure" held no monopoly on violence and irrationality, and that perhaps Hobbes, Burke and Freud had a point in proposing that institutions were protections against our darker human propensities. But if we should refrain from ridiculing the follies of the past, we shouldn't glorify them either. *Greenwich Village 1963* replays these events, and endorses their rhetoric, as if history had never happened.

Banes's single criticism of this glorious epoch is that it did not anticipate the concerns of our own; that is, the movement was not always what we now call politically correct. In a chapter called "Dreaming Freedom," she regrets that the Village avant-garde, however much it spoke about community and defended civil rights, never involved more than a small minority of blacks. Langston Hughes and James Baldwin had plays on Broadway, and such white dramatists as Genet (*The Blacks*), Fugard (*The Blood Knot*) and Duberman (*In White America*) were dealing with racial subjects off-Broadway. But aside from Adrienne Kennedy and Leroi Jones, whose *Dutchman* was a long-running success, blacks did not consider themselves members of the avant-garde, and even Jones left the Village (and changed his name) a short time after. There were no Black Happenings, no Black pop artists, no Black Fluxus. Since socially marginalized African Americans were more interested in entering the artistic mainstream, they considered the avant-garde to be "high art," no matter how communal and folk-oriented it considered itself.

The indifference of blacks toward the avant-garde did not prevent many Village artists from seeking inspiration from black culture. Banes correctly observes that the fascination with improvisation that pervades the theater, dance and other artistic activity of this time was stimulated by black music. The Open Theater based some of its rehearsal techniques on "jamming," a series of associations arising from a theme, derived, as Joseph Chaikin said, "from jazz, from the jam session." Both jazz riffs and verbal improvisation were central to *The Connection*. And the various comedy groups of the time that Banes neglects to mention—Second City, the Premise, Nichols and May—all improvised skits out of suggestions from the audience.

There was, moreover, a good deal of mythologizing about what Banes, scorning the impulse behind it, identifies as the "essential positive primitivism" of blacks. While many black and white liberals of the '60s were eager to deny racial differences in their efforts to achieve full equality for African Americans, the more radical artists (see Norman Mailer's "The White Negro") were favorably comparing the natural, uninhibited physicality of blacks with what Banes calls "the etherealized bodies of Euro-American culture." Clearly Banes is more sensitive to stereotypes about blacks than whites, and she is further confused by our ever-changing racial fashions. At the same time Banes concedes that the concept of "essential positive primitivism" was embraced by the Black Power movement, she nonetheless finds it racially tainted when endorsed by whites. "I do not mean here to charge these avant-gardists... with racism; I only want to say that they were willy-nilly products of their era."

Well, so is Banes, as she demonstrates in criticizing the Village movement for failing to be sufficiently sensitive to women: "Neither male nor female consciousness had yet been raised about the subtleties of female oppression." Just as white artists were prone to praise black bodies as "closer to nature," which she finds vaguely racist, so they were also eager to celebrate the glories of the female body, which she finds altogether sexist. "The gendered universe remains intact" in the work of such heterosexual artists as Lichtenstein, Oldenburg and Rosenquist, simply because they made the mistake of painting attractive women. It is not explained how Lichtenstein could imitate the popular comic strip style that she so admires without drawing its familiar female icons. Sexual glamour is simply verboten: "In pop art and Happenings, in particular, the predominantly

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male artists often seemed to adopt uncritically—even at times to salute—the dominant culture's representations of women both as consumer and as sexual object to be consumed."

Although Banes insists that the Village avant-garde produced "a rich body of work of unprecedented diversity," she has only managed to chronicle its follies and to highlight its evanescence. The avant-garde of any period is ultimately significant less for its artistic postures than for its artistic achievement. But the progress of the creative individual holds little interest for Banes, only the arrested development of the narcissistic personality devoted to sexual calisthenics and polymorphous perversity. Although a number of gifted figures are mentioned in this book, not one is allowed to transcend a "position" to clarify our thinking or illuminate our sense of human existence.

It is tempting to see the origin of our current disorders in the avant-garde enthusiasms of the past. "Children of what was," the author concludes about these artists, "they became parents of what will be." True enough, but instead of absolution for the cultural excesses of these parent-children, we could better use a rigorous assessment of their artistic achievement. That assessment is still being awaited. For all its density and research, *Greenwich Village 1963* only leaves us with the sense that what Yeats called "the mad intellect of democracy" was, in this particular time and place, preparing to snap its last remaining synapse.

If Sally Banes is the publicist of the mind-blowing process, Allan Kaprow is one of its principal theorists. He is only a little more successful in repairing damaged brain passages. His collection of essays, *The Blurring of Art and Life*, is a more condensed effort to proselytize for the democratization of art, using many of the same examples from the period. Best known as the inventor of "Happenings," Kaprow, who is now a professor emeritus of visual arts at the University of California, San Diego, also has a rather extensive academic background, including graduate work in philosophy. He studied art history with Meyer Schapiro and claims Marcel Duchamp (and John Dewey) among his seminal influences. Unlike Sally Banes, he is not an enemy of Action Painting. Indeed, he expresses an almost filial affection for Jackson Pollock, whom he discusses with considerable insight. And although he has dedicated his life to replacing the abstract with the concrete, he considers Happenings to be a logical offshoot of abstract expressionism.

Kaprow defines Happenings, somewhat tautologically, as "events that simply happen." These chance events, much like the creative activities described by Banes, are improvised on the order of jazz, and though they may contain words, language is valued for its sounds rather than its meaning. A Happening is actually a form of anti-theater. It takes place outside such conventional cultural staging areas as playhouses, concert halls or museums. Changing your shirt in a park, crossing the street only with people in red coats, listening to a dripping faucet, all these mundane events constitute what Kaprow calls "life-like art" (as opposed to "artlike art"), a waggish, anti-traditional form of play intended to break down all remaining barriers between what is passively experienced and what is actively fashioned. Kaprow is painfully conscious that if life-like art resembles life more than art, then its intrinsic qualities are hard to define. He is continually asking what makes work of this kind "art." His answers include self-knowledge, self-consciousness and a rather Zenlike enlightenment, suggesting, somewhat poignantly, that despite his scorn for traditional mainstream art, he still can't fully abandon the name of artist.

This from a man who admits that for the last thirty years, his main artistic activity has consisted of things like brushing his teeth (albeit "attentively"). For him even the most quotidian exercises can still retain aesthetic meaning. In his last essay, "The Meaning of Life" (1990), he writes, only half-humorously, that

> cleaning a friend's kitchen floor with Q-tips and spit ... could mean (*a*) seeing life from another perspective; or (*b*) testing your friendship; or (*c*) making the simple seem complicated; or (*d*) putting yourself (your spit) wholly into the job; or (*e*) being free to cheat since no one will see you; or (*f*) being on the track of something big; or (*g*) getting some exercise.

The essay ends with a recipe for making bagels ("You'll like them!"). Kaprow refrains from suggesting that the "meaning of life" can be found in the hole.

The Blurring of Art and Life might seem as ludicrous as *Greenwich Village 1963*, were it not that the personality of the writer is so engaging and exuberant. Kaprow's desire for a truly non-exclusive democratic art is almost Whitmanesque. If describing a handshake or becoming conscious of breathing is

Tea Dance at the Nautilus Hotel (1925)

on a painting by Donald Justice

The gleam of eyes under the striped umbrellas—
We see them still, after so many years,
(Or think we do),—the young men and their dears,
Bandying forward glances as through masks
In the curled bluish haze of panatellas,
And taking nips from little silver flasks.

They sit at tables as the sun is going,
Bent over cigarettes and lukewarm tea,
Talking small talk, gossip and gallantry,
Some of them single, some husbands and wives,
Laughing and telling stories, all unknowing
They sit here in the heyday of their lives.

And some then dance off in the late sunlight,
Lips brushing cheeks, hands growing warm in hands,
Feet gliding at the lightest of commands,
All summer on their caught or sighing breath
As they whirl on toward the oncoming night,
And nothing further from their thoughts than death.

But they danced here sixty-five years ago!—
Almost all of them must be underground.
Who could be left to smile at the sound
Of the oldfangled dance tunes and each pair
Of youthful lovers swaying to and fro?
Only a dreamer, who was never there.

ROBERT MEZEY

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artistic material, then everything is annexable to art and everyone is an artist. Kaprow carries this logic one step further by exhorting "artists of the world to drop out! You have nothing to lose but your professions." Art is always an imitation, which cannot improve on nature and, as a social instrument, is totally useless, having never changed a thing. Only when artists cease to be artists can they convert their talents into something purposeful, namely "play." Like a number of his contemporaries, Kaprow feels tracked, and trapped, by the culture. He finds it ironic that the desire to make a private art should be accompanied by so much attention from the media. (Warhol, for example, had so many speaking engagements that he hired a stand-in to make university appearances.)

I suspect that Kaprow's theories are partly animated by his desire to refuse celebrity, at once the artist's greatest temptation and greatest affliction. When celebrity comes to an end, then criticism will end with it, and critics will have to satisfy themselves with doing historical research in universities. Ultimately, then, behind all Kaprow's theorizing lies a willed effort to escape from the fatal artificial embraces of cultural journalists, art critics and other agents of hype into a creative natural world of pleasure and community. It is a doomed effort, and often a labored one, but in Kaprow's writings, if not his Happenings, it represents a rueful appeal for artistic dignity in a culture intoxicated with notoriety. •

The Sensationalist

By Richard Jenkyns

The King of Inventors: A Life of Wilkie Collins by Catherine Peters

(Princeton University Press, 502 pp., $29.95)

By his own command Wilkie Collins's tombstone in Kensal Green Cemetery, London, bears only his name and the words "Author of *The Woman in White* and other works of fiction." Nothing was to be added, no mention of family, no hope of future life, no pious or sentimental praise. There was pride in this austerity, but also a melancholy confession. Wilkie—which, according to Catherine Peters, is what everyone called him—was not as unlucky as Mascagni, who conducted the fiftieth anniversary performance of *Cavalleria Rusticana* in a celebration that acknowledged the hard truth that in half a century he had never had such a hit again; but for twenty-five years or so before his death in 1889 Wilkie's career had been in decline. Famous in his lifetime as a prolific novelist and intermittently successful playwright, he is remembered almost entirely for the two masterpieces of his middle life, *The Woman in White* (1860), the first and by far the best of the mid-Victorian "sensation novels," and *The Moonstone* (1868), usually reckoned to be the first English detective novel. A few more of his books are occasionally read, *Basil, No Name, Armadale*; the rest are forgotten.

The two masterpieces have a distinctive, and perhaps a unique, place in Victorian literature. The Victorians produced their share of bad good novels: George Eliot's *Romola* might stand as an example—earnest, intelligent, well-planned and yet plainly a failure as a work of art. There is a richer crop of good bad novels, vulgar in conception, coarse in execution, but carried out with vividness and verve, like Charles Kingsley's *Hypatia* or Lew Wallace's *Ben Hur*. Wilkie's best books fit neither category: they do not rise above a certain level, but on that level they work beautifully. T.S. Eliot said that *Armadale* "has no merit beyond melodrama, and it has every merit that melodrama can have." This shrewd judgment would be too harsh of *The Moonstone* or *The Woman in White*, and yet even applied to them it would contain a germ of truth.

Wilkie is a superb storyteller, both dramatic and amusing. As Peters suggests, he evokes fear and anxiety all the better by commonly avoiding blood and open violence, and by counterpointing sensational events with an observant feeling for the flow of everyday life. She also remarks, very truly, that Sir Percival Glyde, the subsidiary villain in *The Woman in White*, is "adequately but conventionally characterized," and the same might be said, without great injustice, of most of his people. Miss Clack, the embittered spinster coating malevolence with the sugar of piety; Gabriel Betteredge, the stalwart, slightly stuffy upper servant; stoic, sensible Marian Halcombe: they all come easily to life.

This vividness is enhanced by Wilkie's favorite technique, first tried in *The Woman in White*, of having the entire story told by various of the characters in it. This device of the limited or unreliable narrator is often thought to belong to highbrow fiction, and it is in any case notoriously hard to bring off (how ponderous it becomes in *Doktor Faustus*) but Wilkie carries it off with assurance. Still, he does not achieve, nor does he seek, much depth in the portrayal of character. Indeed, he did not care for the refined psychologizing of the late-Victorian art novel. A character in one of his last books seems to speak for Collins himself:

> These new writers are so good to old women. No story to excite our poor nerves; no improper character to cheat us out of our sympathies; no dramatic situations to frighten us; exquisite management of details (as the reviewers say) and a masterly anatomy of human motives which—I know what I mean, my dear, but I can't explain it.

Whom did Collins have in mind? Henry James? George Meredith? Certainly, at all events, the new highbrow novel, remote from those half-popular roots out of which most of the great fiction of the earlier Victorian age had sprung.

At one point Peters tries to get Wilkie to join the highbrows, finding in *No Name* "a realist investigation of individual psychology that was closer to the fiction of George Eliot than anything else he had written." She compares a rumination on human character in each of the two novelists. Here (in part) is the passage from *No Name*:

> Does there exist in every human being, beneath that outward and visible character which is shaped into form by the social influence surrounding us, an inward, invisible disposition, ... which education may indirectly modify, but can never hope to change?... Are there, infinitely varying with each individual, inbred forces of Good and Evil in each of us, deep down below the reach of mortal encouragement, and mortal repression—hidden Good and hidden Evil, both alike at the mercy of the liberating opportunity and the sufficient temptation?...

And here is George Eliot, in *Danie Deronda*:

> Goodness is a large, often a prospective word; like harvest, which at one stage when we talk of it lies all underground, with an indeterminate future: is the germ prospering in the darkness?... Each stage has its peculiar blight, and may have the healthy

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life choked out of it by a particular action of the foul land which rears or neighbors it, or by damage brought from foulness afar.

There is some similarity of language (and regrettably, a shared portentousness); but it is important to observe that the two writers are taking opposite views. Wilkie imagines people being born with fixed and unalterable moral natures: circumstances may bring forth that nature or they may keep it imprisoned, but in itself it is—on this view—incapable of change. It is no wonder that his Good and his Evil have capital letters; they are like good and bad angels, distinct existences that have taken up residence in the human heart from its earliest moments. George Eliot, by contrast, sees moral character as indeterminate: though it has certain innate tendencies, these may be shaped or colored by outside influences, as the crop may be stunted or blighted by weeds or disease. In terms of our modern debate on nature and nurture, the two novelists take their stand in opposing camps.

Whatever the truth of the matter, one can see that the latter view is better suited to the novel of psychological analysis, the former to melodrama. Wilkie's Count Fosco is one of the most splendid villains ever imagined. With his megalomania tempered by intellect, courtesy and an almost feminine delicacy, he is an ancestor of Professor Moriarty and those world-domination baddies in the James Bond books, though he is vastly superior to these descendants. But he would not be improved if we were to be told that he was a decent enough fellow who had had an unhappy childhood or got into bad company as a young man. He needs the core of pure evil within a refined, almost kindly exterior for his effect.

Fosco is perhaps the only one of Wilkie's inventions to have the mythic quality that we associate with Dickens's characters. Dickens, indeed, played a large part in Wilkie's life. He published much of his early work in Dickens's magazine *Household Words*, and the two families were to become connected when Wilkie's brother married Dickens's daughter, Kate. Genius and a continuous manic energy are both rare things; and hardly ever have they been combined in such abundance as in Dickens. At times he took over Wilkie's life. He whirls him round France, Switzerland and Italy, or sweeps him away to Cumberland, where he drags him up a mountain in pouring rain (poor Wilkie, struggling to keep up, falls into a stream and sprains his ankle).

By the same token, Dickens lights up Peters's book whenever he appears in it. If Wilkie wrote intimate letters, they appear to have perished; what does survive, if we may judge from Peters's extracts, seems disappointingly conventional, falling back too often on a facetious jocularity. But Dickens could hardly scribble a sentence without giving it his own peculiar stamp. Peters tells us that the hypochondriac Frederick Fairlie, in *The Woman in White*, was largely based on an actual valetudinarian known to both Dickens and Wilkie, and quotes Dickens's description of him staying in his carriage on a cross-Channel steamer:

> I could not but mount the Royal Car ... perforated in every direction with cupboards, containing every description of Physic, old brandy, East India sherry, sandwiches, oranges, cordial waters, newspapers, pocket handkerchiefs, shawls, flannels, telescopes, compasses, repeaters (for ascertaining the hour in the dark), and finger rings of great value. He ... asked me the extraordinary question "How Mrs. Williams, the American Actress, kept her wig on?" I then perceived that mankind was to be in a conspiracy to believe that he wears his own hair.

That could come straight from one of the novels, and it suggests one of the keys to Dickens's success: his characters may often seem grotesque and fantastic (more so than Wilkie's), but they are founded on an awareness of the quirks and the particularities of ordinary life and an acute eye for significant detail.

Wilkie's own inner life must remain mostly, it seems, a mystery. Everyone agreed that he was charming and amusing company, but charm, alas, is the most evanescent of personal qualities. Peters gives a vivid sense of his outward appearance: gnome-like, with an oddly protuberant forehead, a big head, short arms and legs and "pretty little hands and feet, very like a woman's." From middle life onward he was increasingly crippled by a mysterious ailment described as "rheumatic gout," which he treated with ever larger doses of laudanum. His steady productivity in the face of these dreadful odds seems quietly heroic. His private life has attracted a good deal of interest in recent times because of its irregularity: he never married, and from his mid-30s lived openly with Mrs. Caroline Graves, a widow with a daughter, to whom he became much attached. Some years later he had three children by Martha Rudd, the daughter of a Norfolk shepherd. From this time on he ran two households, established in the same district of London.

So was he one of those "other Victorians"? Yes and no. Peters is inclined to see him as an inveterate bohemian, who could not encounter a convention without wanting to outrage it. But another interpretation is possible. Mrs. Graves seems to have had strong yearnings toward respectability: of artisan stock, she pretended to be the daughter of a gentleman. Presumably it would have been plain enough to Wilkie and his acquaintance that she was not comme il faut. "Wilkie was one of the few Victorians who would not have hesitated to marry a 'fallen woman,'" Peters comments, but one may doubt that. Social pressures are often stronger than moral ones. If Wilkie had really wanted to shock his friends by his relationship with Mrs. Graves, he could have married her. Peters allows that he could still take up invitations to dinners and house parties as a "valued and petted bachelor."

A socially disastrous marriage would surely have closed more doors: it is at least possible that, ironically, a reluctance to offend is what kept him from matrimony. The two mistresses and two households of his later years sound rather more louche, but after all, any number of Victorian gentlemen kept mistresses, and if Wilkie had been married to Caroline Graves, his arrangements might not have seemed quite so odd. Peters concedes that the picture we have of him at the end of his life is of the head of a "busy, loving, bourgeois family," "wrapped in a protective cocoon of female concern." The family was one institution that the Victorians almost never questioned. Nor did Wilkie; in fact, he liked it so much that he had two.

Peters tells her story straightforwardly and well, with nice touches of dry humor and a good balance of biography and literary criticism. At moments she is oddly unaware of Victorian idiom: she thinks it noteworthy that Wilkie always addressed Dickens by his surname, and she castigates as snobbish or groveling letters written by his father that are entirely normal by the custom of the time. For some reason she has it in for Collins *père*, but her hints of oedipal hostility on Wilkie's part seem to be without foundation. (A dutiful life of his father was the first book that Wilkie published.) But it would be wrong to cavil long. This is an attractive life of an interesting subject, and one can echo Peters's own conclusion: "There are greater Victorian writers; but none who is quite like Wilkie Collins."

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NEW YORK DIARIST

Trumped

IT MUST BE HERE SOMEWHERE. That was the one clue she let drop—*The Prophet*—that the wedding ceremony included a reading from *The Prophet.* I have been searching the book for weeks. What else do I have to cling to but these crumbs of hers, and his, and the fragmentary bulletins, forgotten now by everyone but me, as to what went on where I ought to have been, but was not. I suppose I could ask Howard Stern. *He* was invited. Or Don King. Susan Lucci was invited. Robin Leach. Wesley Snipes. Adnan Khashoggi was invited. An arms dealer was invited! I was not invited.

Here's something the groom might have picked: *Then a mason came forth and said, Speak to us of Houses. And he answered and said: Your house is your larger body.*

Perhaps the bride selected this, in reference to her line of maternity wear: *And the weaver said, Speak to us of Clothes. And he answered: Your clothes conceal much of your beauty, yet they hide not the unbeautiful.*

THE DAY THE EVENT WAS FIRST announced, I was so sure an invitation would be coming my way that I told the Goldings, our next-door neighbors: "Of *course* I'll be invited. There are 2,000 invitations going out—2,000 last-minute telephone calls."

"What's the rush?" asked the Goldings.

"Don't you people read the papers?" I said, my anxiety betrayed. "They are getting married right away because of the crazy killer on the Long Island Railroad. He made them aware of the brevity of life."

"And you'll be one of the 2,000?" They were clearly impressed.

"Why would I not?" I asked, rhetorically.

Is not dread of thirst when your well is full, the thirst that is unquenchable?

WHAT IS GIBRAN TALKING ABOUT? I have never understood a word of *The Prophet,* not even at age 14, when one is supposed to understand *The Prophet.* What passage did they choose? It will be indecipherable, of course, but finding it will make me feel as if I were with them. All right, I never actually *met* either of them. But I always felt *close.* Their daily revelations always made me feel *close.* Was I not always on their side?

When they said they met in the Marble Collegiate Church (it was rumored he picked her up on a street corner), did I not believe them? When he got her a room at the St. Moritz, claiming they were "no more than friends," did I not take their word? When she told Diane Sawyer on national television that she loved him, did I not weep? When he was linked to Robin Givens, did I not bristle? When she swished that little fringed skirt in "The Will Rogers Follies," did I not clap? When Baby Tiffany was born, did I not goo? When The Foreign One became a novelist, did I not scoff?

Not right. They did not treat me right. All that week I waited for my telephone call. One time a voice sounded so much like hers, but it was the woman from Sprint.

THE REASON I SO desperately wanted an invitation was that I had a premonition that the wedding was to be the last spectacular event of the Age of Celebrity, the final glorious cataclysm after which the world would revert to unspeakable dullness or explode. The marriage of the artist of the deal and his bediamonded doxy. The marriage of one mind. They had become the most important couple in America, perhaps ever. How better could the siècle achieve its fin? Day after day I devoured every tidbit: "The cake will stand six feet tall. His tuxedo will be furnished by Brioni, her shoes by Blahnik." Her shoes.... "Chef Margo Dewhurst will slice the sushi." And so on. Chef Margo Dewhurst was invited. Did she sit beside Wesley Snipes?

Much in you is still man, and much in you is not yet man, but a shapeless Pygmy that walks asleep in the mist searching for its own awakening. Say what?

BY THE FRIDAY BEFORE THE MONday, I was out of control. I phoned his publicist Chen Sam, or Sam Chen, I forget, who happens to be Liz Taylor's publicist, who happened to star in *Father of the Bride,* which I happened to watch on T.V. So there was a connection. But to be on the safe side, I told her that I was covering the wedding for *Vanity Fair,* only to learn that a dozen other people were already covering the wedding for *Vanity Fair,* and I was caught in a lie. Sam or Chen left a message on my answering machine, saying that there was no room for me, but she looked forward to seeing me "at the next affair."

What? I should have told her THE NEW REPUBLIC?

On the weekend I walked down to the Plaza to hang around and stare at the revolving door. Thwatathwatathwat. Inside, Chef Margo was selecting her toque. After five or six hours I wandered over to Tiffany (the store), where the couple was registered, thinking to buy them a gift—candle sticks are always in good taste—then to messenger them over that day to make them feel guilty, or better still, to remind them of the one whom they had, in their understandable haste, neglected to phone, yet still had time. I decided against it. They'd have given my candle sticks to some charity. That's what they *said* they were doing with the money they got from *The National Enquirer.* Right.

The morning of The Monday I was praying for a hailstorm. I amused myself with the bitter thought that from then on her initials would be M.T. Ha ha. She'd be known as Mrs. "The." Ha ha ha. I hoped that Brioni and Blahnik would screw up royally, delivering the wrong sizes. I saw a photo in a tabloid that made him look like Liberace. I sniggered. *And the flier was also the creeper. A voice cannot carry the tongue and the lips that gave it wings.*

WHEN THE THING WAS OVER AND done with, I reluctantly read the reports. The food was described: racks of lamb, filets of beef, quail, salmon, turkey, ziti, roasted baby winter vegetables, shrimp in green curry sauce, glazed this, baked that, gelatin everywhere, heart-shaped steaks. Heart-shaped steaks! Uneaten portions were donated to the homeless and turned into soup, but the homeless didn't like it.

Metropolitan Opera singer Camellia Johnson sang "There's a Place for Us." Us. The groom brayed that it was a "great day for New York." There was a published list of those who were invited and did not show. No room, eh, Chen or Sam? There was even a list of those who were *not* invited, and I was not on that either.

THIS MORNING CAME A KNOCKING at the door. I peered through the peephole, but could only make out the torsos of a handsomely dressed young couple. Their arms were tanned. Had they been on a wedding trip? It was the Goldings.

"So? How was it?" they asked.

Surely you would not honour one guest above another, for he who is more mindful of one loses the love and the faith of both.

ROGER ROSENBLATT

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